



Vol. No. 870

# CELESTIAL BEINGS

Yakshas, Gandharvas, Apsaras and more





# CELESTIAL BEINGS

**Yakshas, Gandharvas, Apsaras and more**

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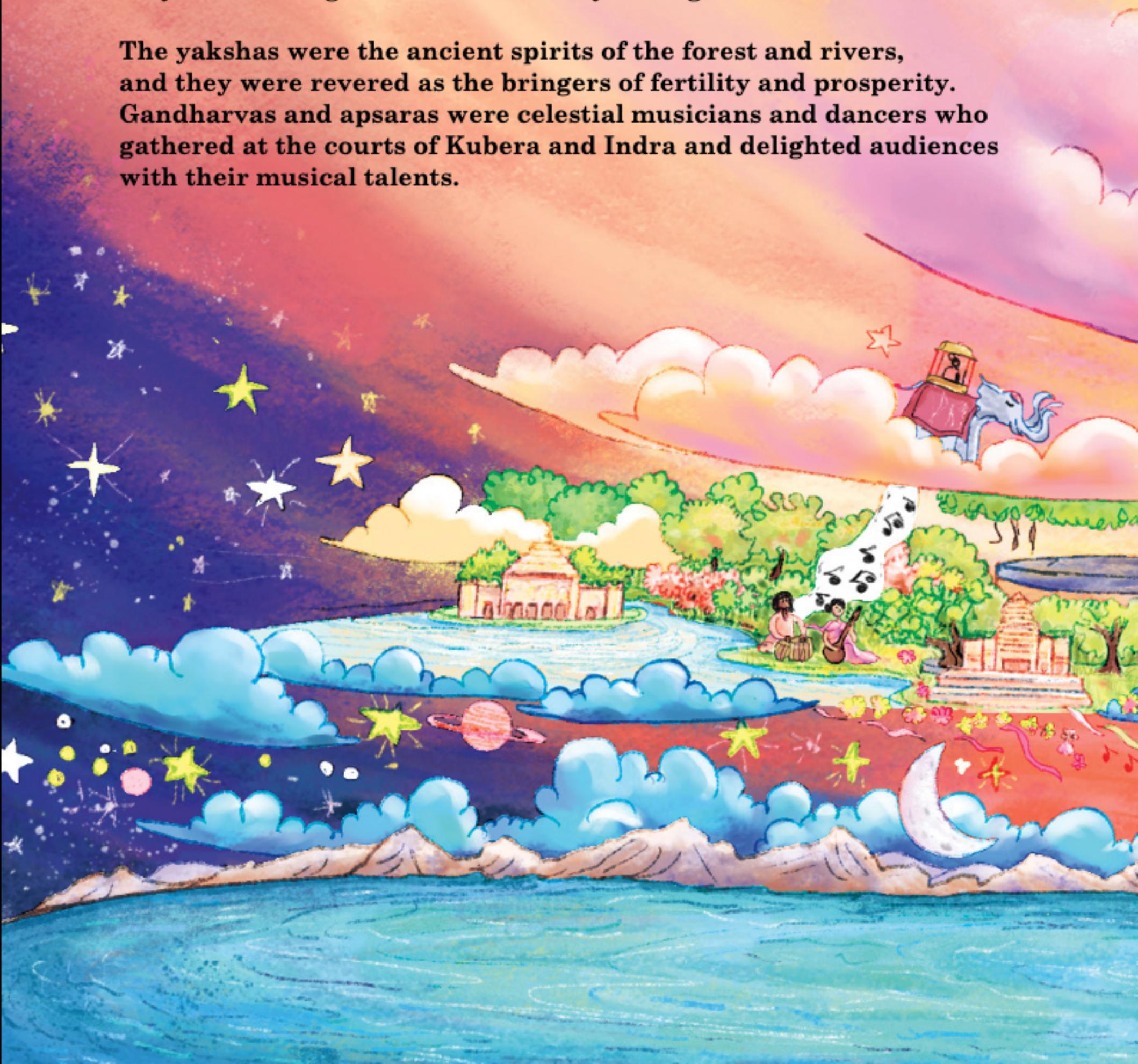
# CELESTIAL BEINGS

Yakshas, Gandharvas, Apsaras and more



In Indian mythology, whether Hindu, Buddhist or Jain, the three lokas — heaven, earth and the underworld — are inhabited by all kinds of divine and semi-divine beings. The stories of Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva and Mahadevi, as well as the epics are well-known. But there are also fascinating tales of other celestial beings who possess magical powers and talents like the Yakshas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Vidyadharas and Kinnaras. These were the messengers, entertainers, attendants and courtiers to the devas and asuras. They protected the earth's treasures and lived in their far-off, secret kingdoms in the mountains. Many tasks were entrusted to them as they could change form at will and fly through the worlds in a trice.

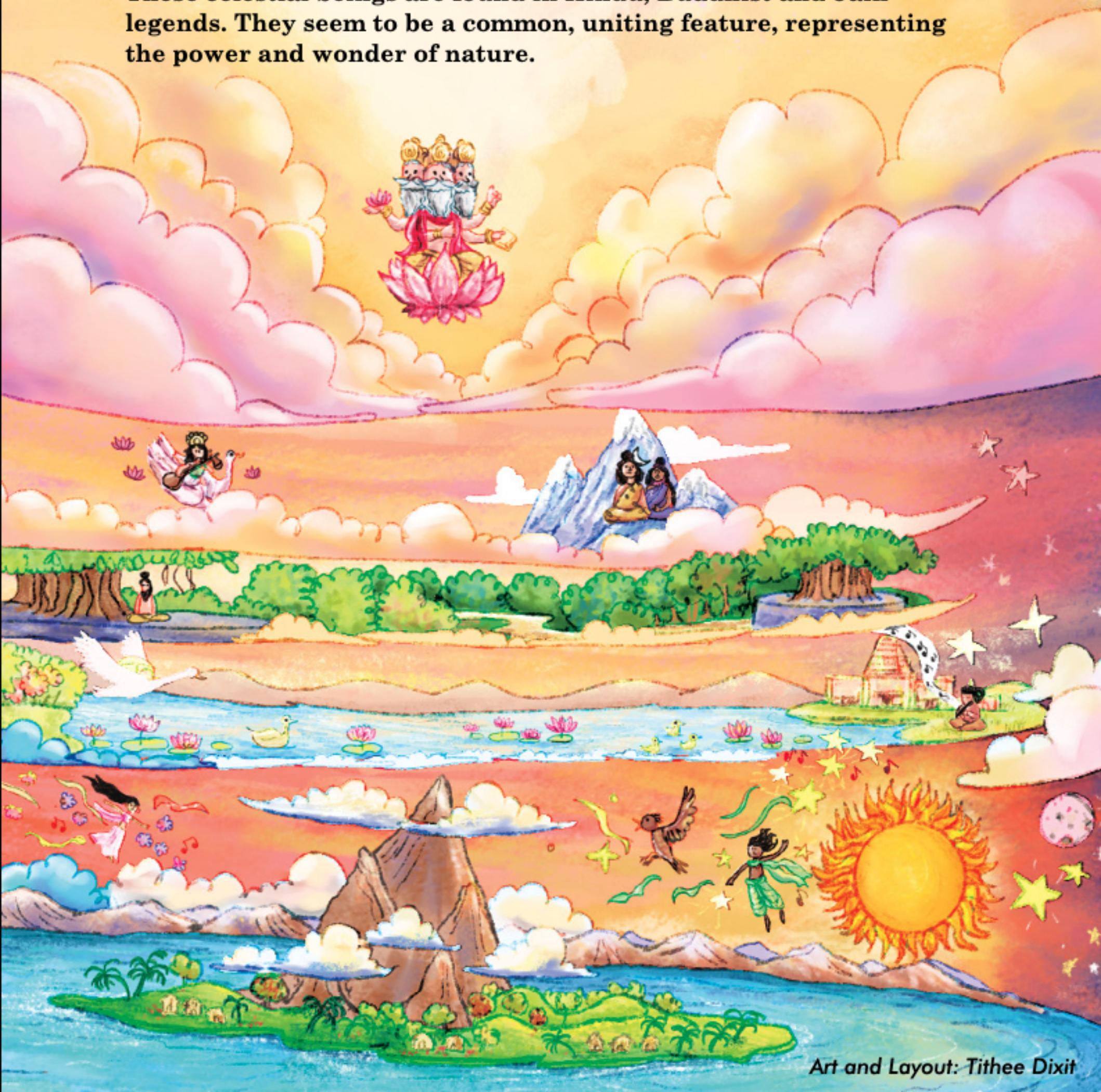
The yakshas were the ancient spirits of the forest and rivers, and they were revered as the bringers of fertility and prosperity. Gandharvas and apsaras were celestial musicians and dancers who gathered at the courts of Kubera and Indra and delighted audiences with their musical talents.



**Vidyadharas** were adept in all the sciences and secret mysteries and were called upon to help in times of crisis. **Kinnaras** were bird-like creatures, adept at music and magic.

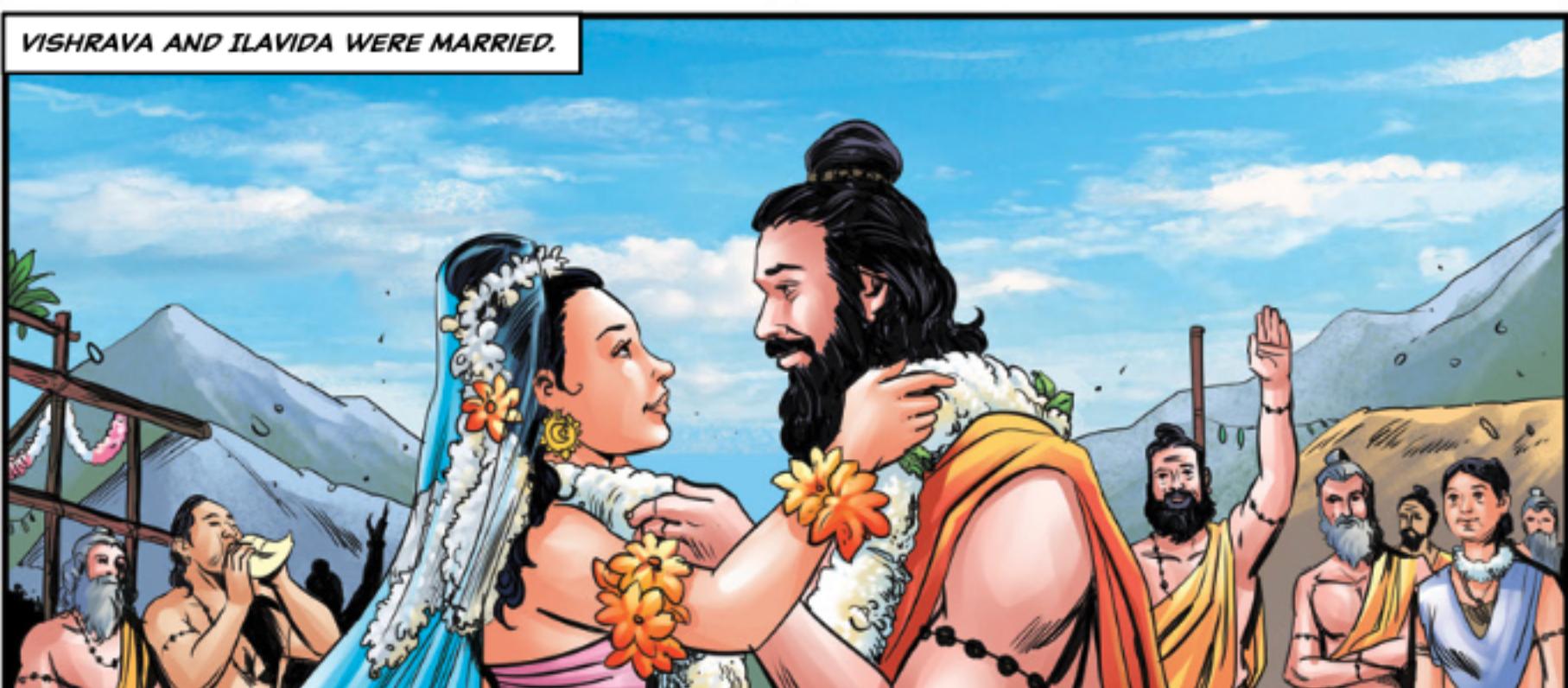
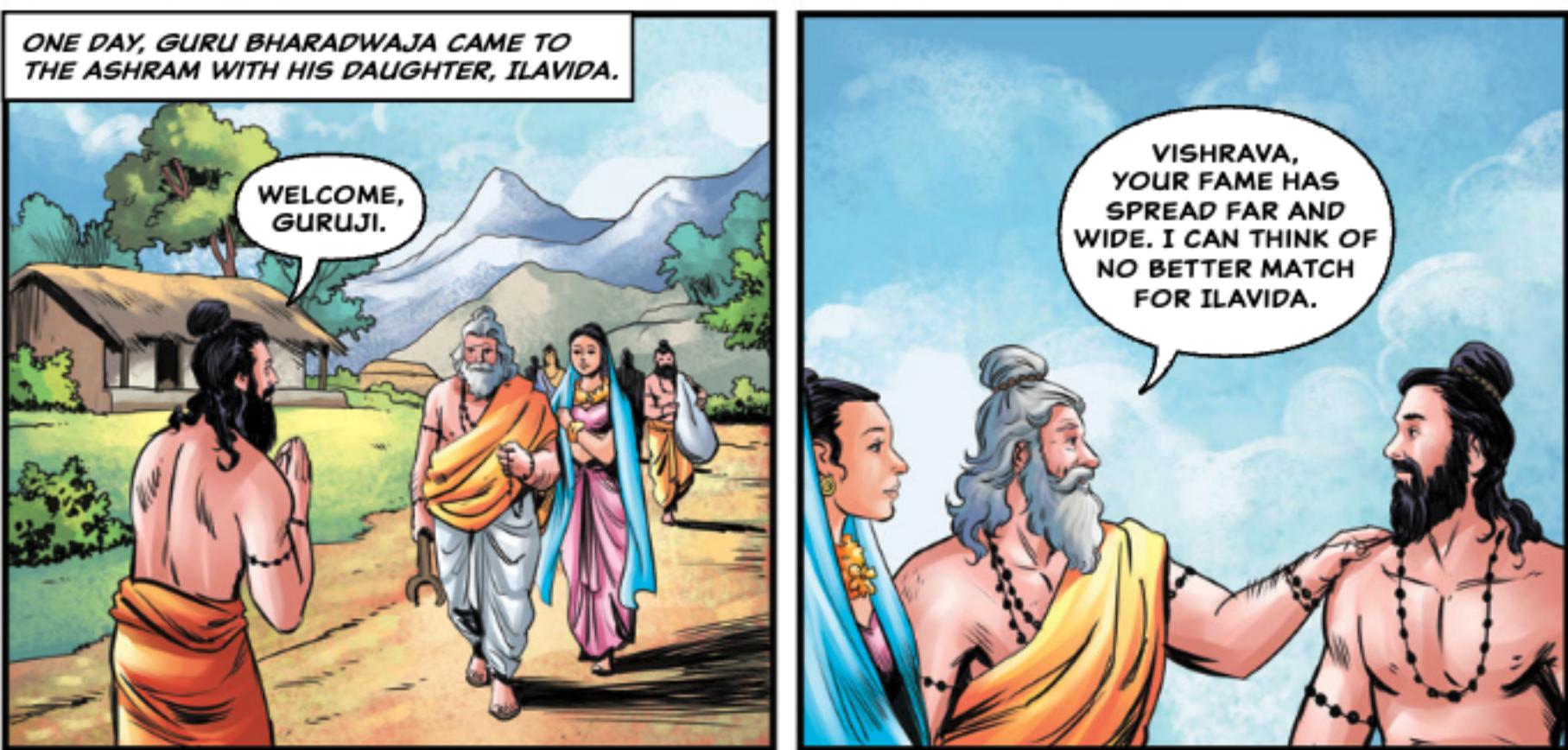
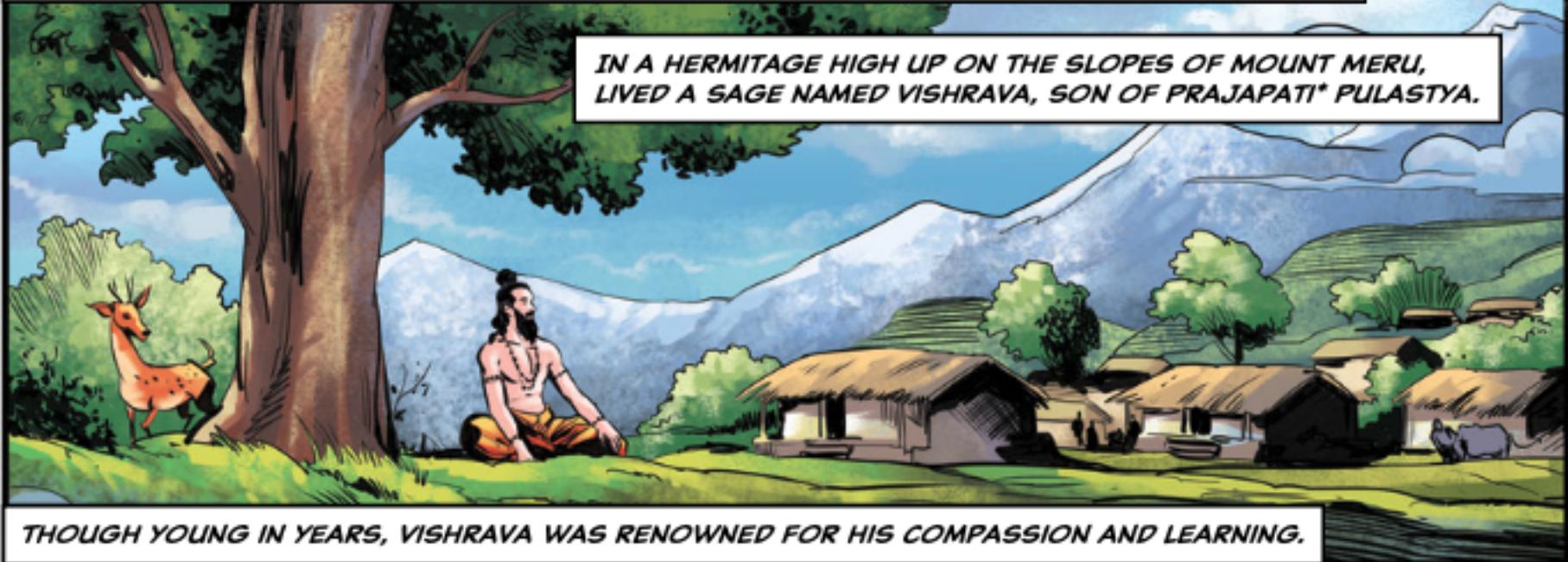
Interestingly, in many of the tales, mortals can acquire supernatural powers and attain the status of a yaksha, or an asura can become a vidyadbara through learning and penance. Sometimes, it's the other way around, when a celestial is sent to earth to live a mortal's life.

These celestial beings are found in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain legends. They seem to be a common, uniting feature, representing the power and wonder of nature.



# KUBERA

YAKSHAS ARE NATURE DEITIES, ASSOCIATED WITH TREES AND RIVERS. THEY ARE BELIEVED TO BRING GOOD FORTUNE BY ENSURING ABUNDANT RAIN, GOOD HARVESTS AND GOOD HEALTH. KUBERA WAS THE KING OF THE YAKSHAS AND THE GUARDIAN OF ALL THE EARTH'S TREASURES.



\*ONE OF THE SEVEN GREAT SAGES OF ANCIENT TIMES

## KUBERA

SOON THEY WERE BLESSED WITH A SON WHOM THEY NAMED VAISHRAVANA.

OUR SON HAS A HAPPY NATURE.

BUT THE OTHER CHILDREN TEASE HIM ABOUT HIS APPEARANCE. THEY CALL HIM 'KUBERA', THE ILL-SHAPED ONE.

DO NOT WORRY. OUR SON IS BRAVE AND KIND. HE HAS A GREAT DESTINY AHEAD.

HOWEVER, THE NAME STUCK.

IT SO HAPPENED THAT THE RAKSHASA KING, SUMALI, WAS TRAVELLING IN SEARCH OF A SUITABLE HUSBAND FOR HIS DAUGHTER, KAIKESI. ONE DAY —

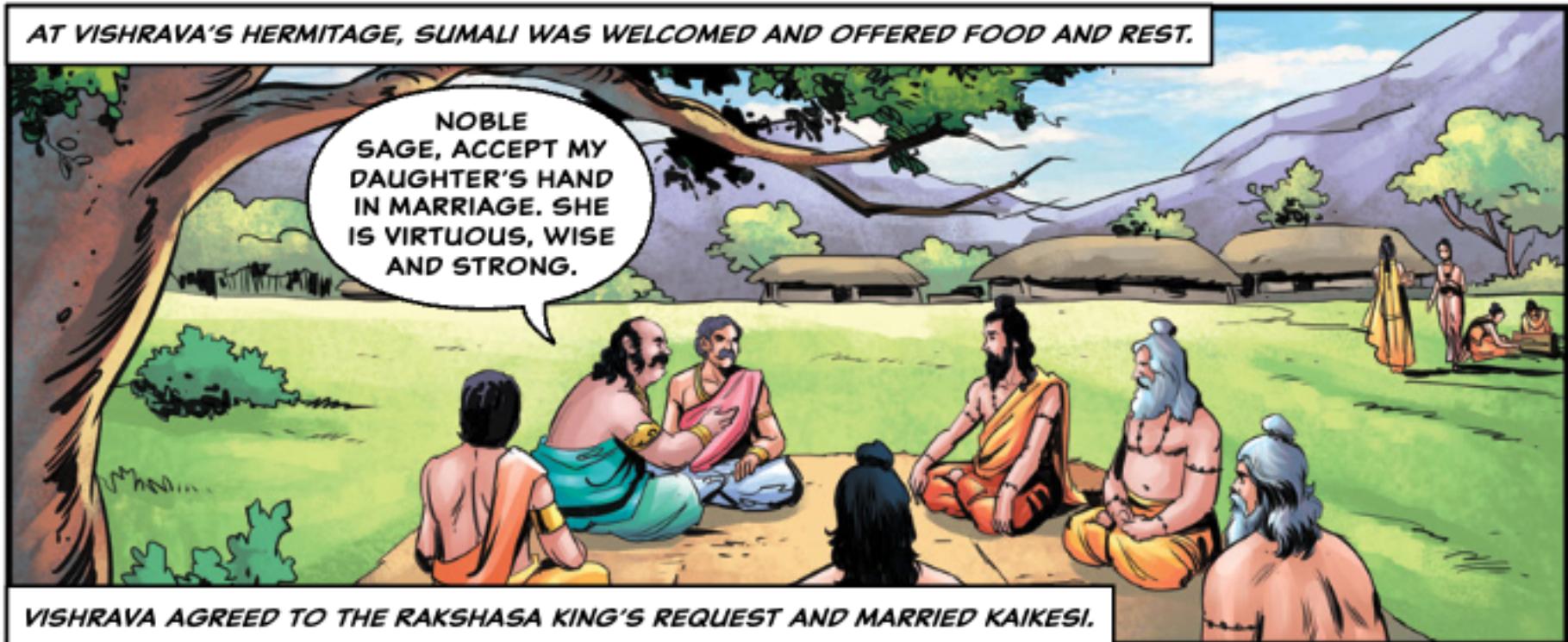
WHERE ARE ALL THOSE DEVAS AND YAKSHAS GOING?

LORD, THEY ARE GOING TO PAY HOMAGE TO VISHRAVA, THE MOST LEARNED AND NOBLE OF SAGES. HE LIVES IN A HERMITAGE IN THESE HILLS.

SUMALI ALSO SET OFF FOR VISHRAVA'S HERMITAGE.



AT VISHRAVA'S HERMITAGE, SUMALI WAS WELCOMED AND OFFERED FOOD AND REST.

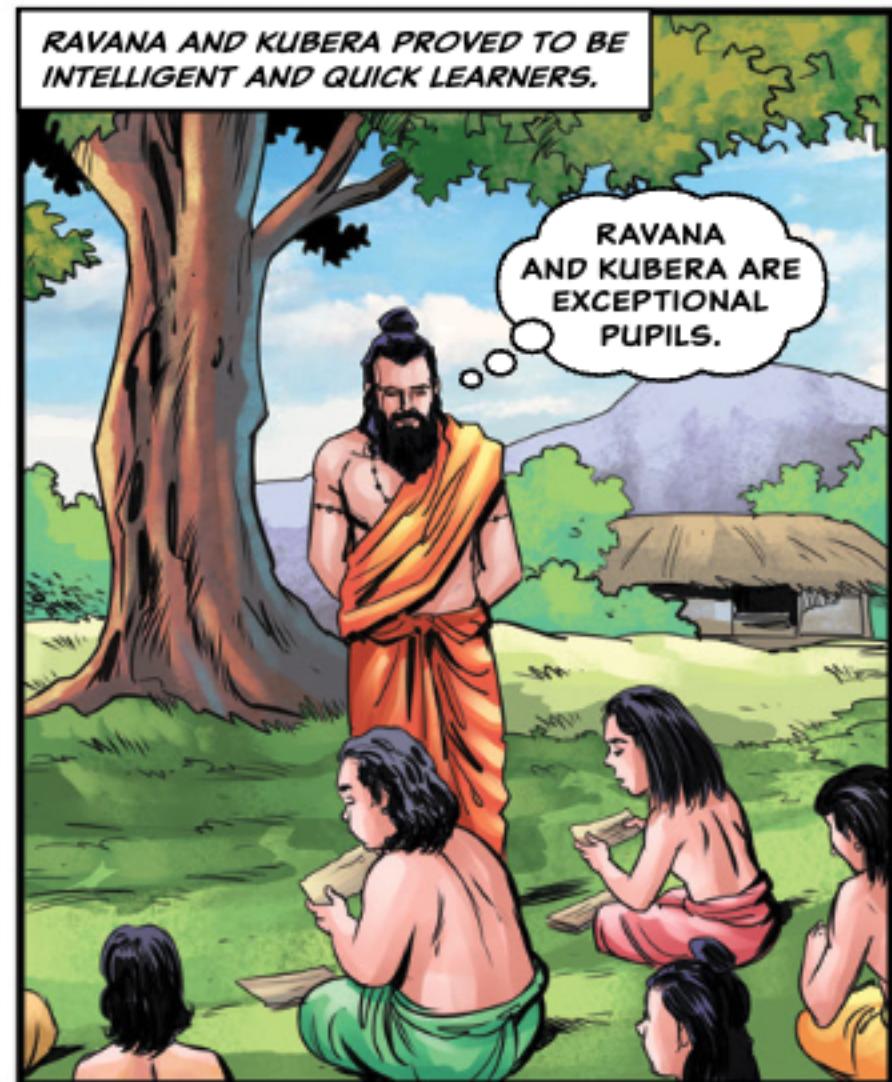


VISHRAVA AGREED TO THE RAKSHASA KING'S REQUEST AND MARRIED KAIKESI.

IN DUE COURSE, KAIKESI BORE THREE SONS – RAVANA, KUMBHAKARANA AND VIBHISHANA, AND A DAUGHTER, SHURPANAKHA.



RAVANA AND KUBERA PROVED TO BE INTELLIGENT AND QUICK LEARNERS.



## KUBERA

HOWEVER, WHEN IT CAME TO THE MARTIAL ARTS —

HA HA,  
KUBERA, YOU  
HAVE MISSED THE  
TARGET AGAIN! YOU  
WILL NEVER BECOME  
A WARRIOR!



MY LORD,  
RAVANA IS ALWAYS  
MOCKING KUBERA FOR  
HIS LACK OF PROWESS  
IN FIGHTING.

YES, IT  
TROUBLES  
ME TOO.



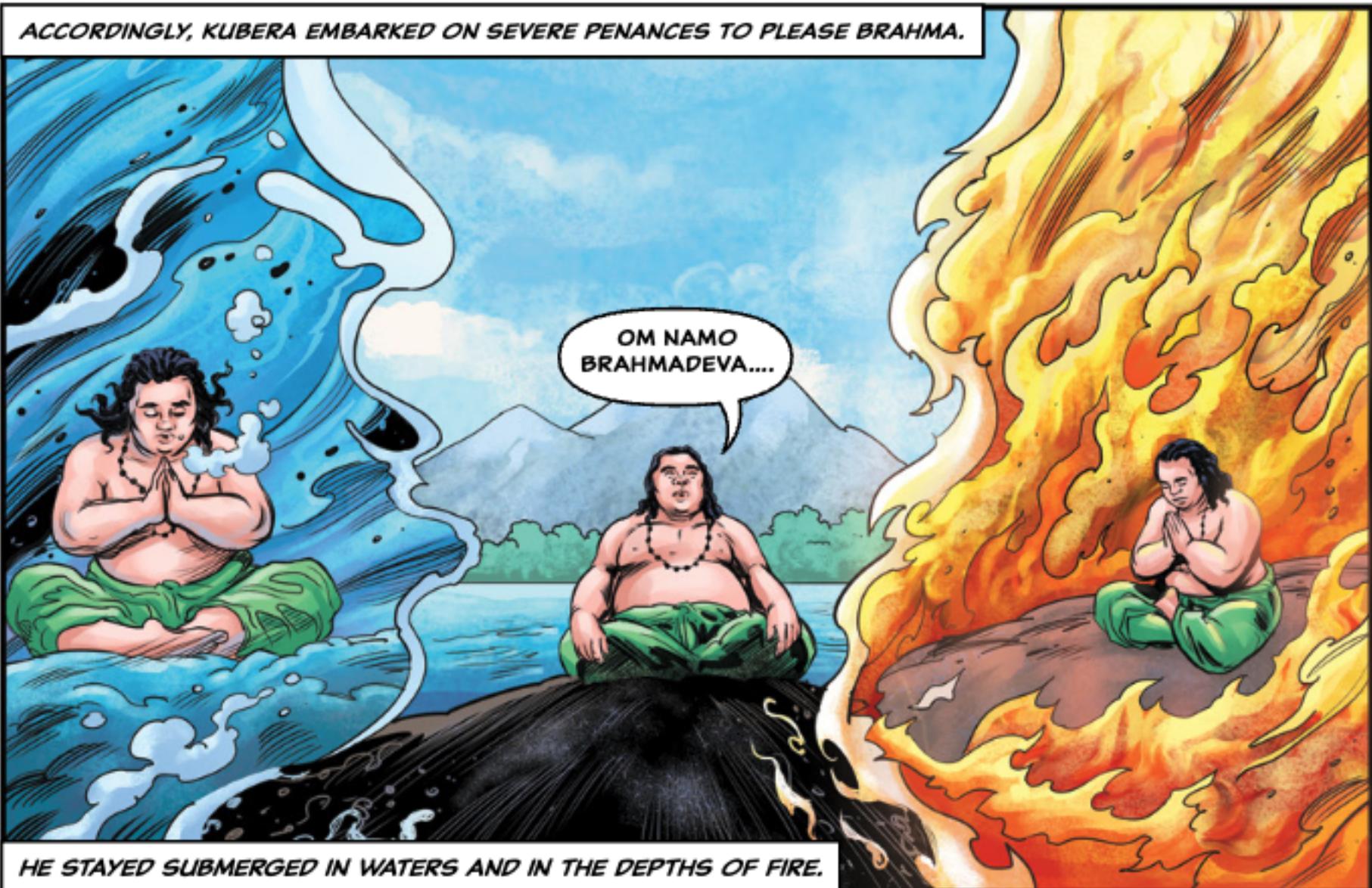
VISHRAVA COUNSELLLED  
A DESPONDENT KUBERA —

MY SON,  
YOU MUST PRAY  
TO LORD BRAHMA TO  
GRANT YOU SPECIAL  
POWERS.



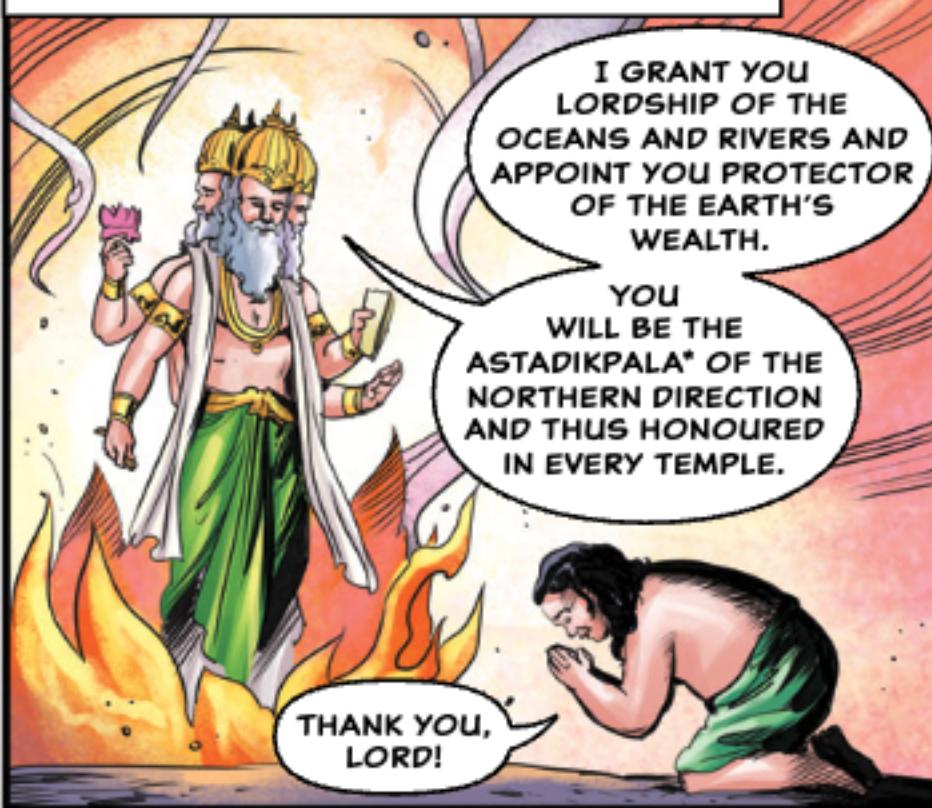
ACCORDINGLY, KUBERA EMBARKED ON SEVERE PENANCES TO PLEASE BRAHMA.

OM NAMO  
BRAHMADEVA....



HE STAYED SUBMERGED IN WATERS AND IN THE DEPTHS OF FIRE.

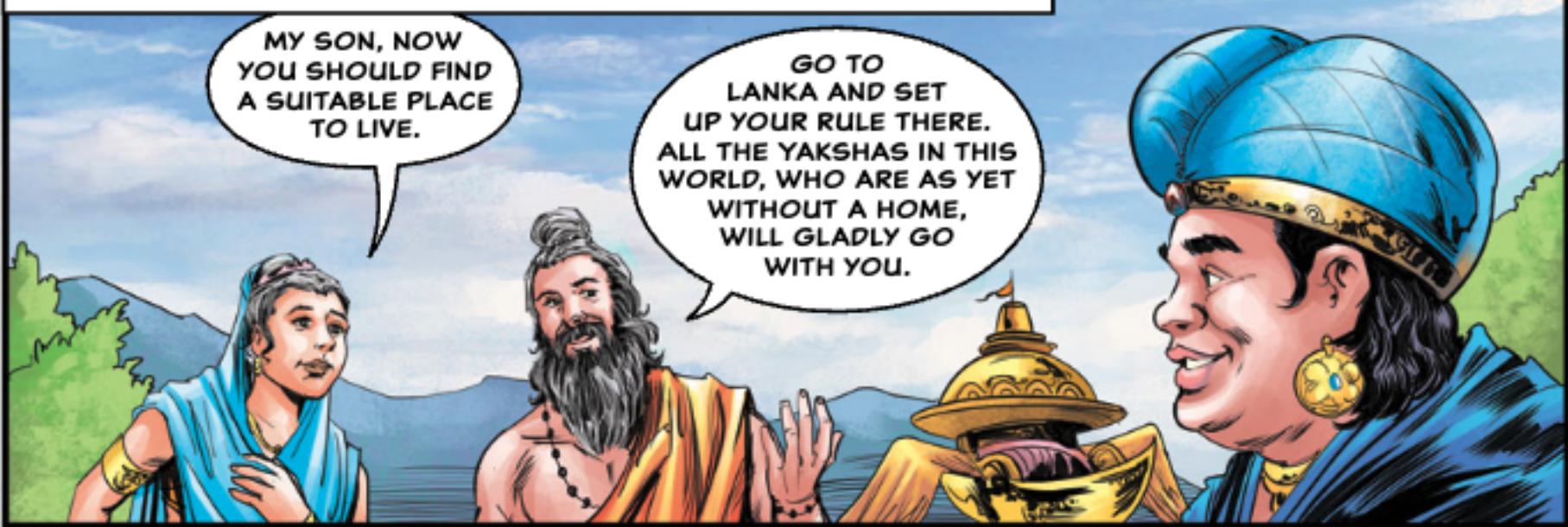
EVENTUALLY, BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



BRAHMA ALSO GAVE KUBERA THE PUSHPAKA VIMANA AND MANY VALUABLE TREASURES.



VISHRAVAS AND ILAVIDA WERE OVERJOYED AT THEIR SON'S NEW STATUS.

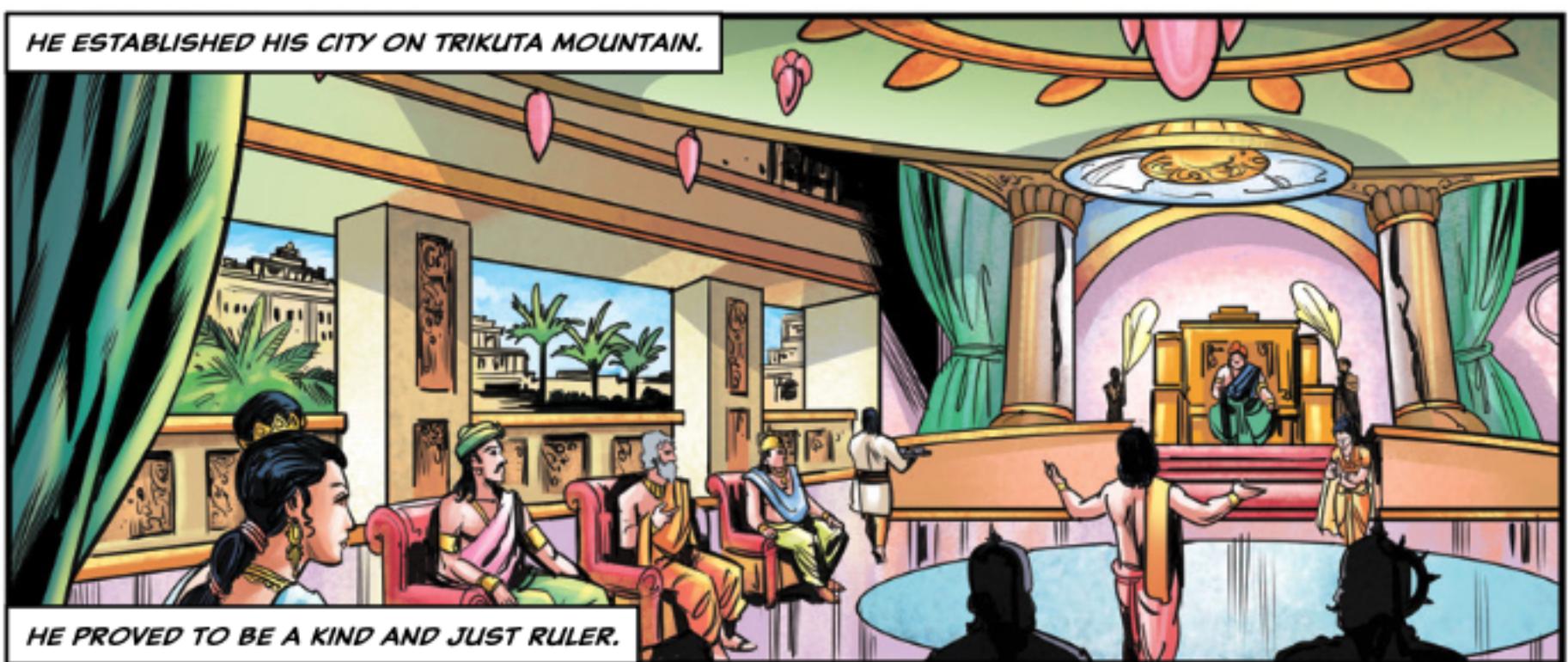


KUBERA FLEW TO THE ISLAND OF LANKA WITH THE YAKSHAS AND YAKSHIS.



\*ONE OF THE EIGHT LORDS OF DIRECTION

HE ESTABLISHED HIS CITY ON TRIKUTA MOUNTAIN.



HE PROVED TO BE A KIND AND JUST RULER.

BACK IN THE HERMITAGE, RAVANA WAS CONSUMED WITH JEALOUSY. HIS MOTHER KAIKESI SYMPATHISED WITH HIM.

I CANNOT BEAR THAT MY STUNTED HALF-BROTHER SHOULD BE SO RICH AND POWERFUL.

YOU MUST ALSO PERFORM PENANCE AND SEEK A BOON FROM BRAHMA.

THUS, RAVANA EMBARKED ON A PENANCE LASTING A 1,000 YEARS.

OM NAMO BRAHMADEVA...

SO INTENSE WAS HIS ENERGY, THAT THE HEAVENS BEGAN TO TREMBLE.

LORD, YOUR DEVOTEE WILL CAUSE THE EARTH TO SHATTER WITH HIS PENANCE.



BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE RAVANA.

I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR DEVOTION. ASK YOUR BOON, RAVANA.

LORD, GRANT ME INVINCIBILITY.

I MUST GRANT THE BOON WITH CARE, FOR RAVANA MAY MISUSE HIS POWER.



SO BE IT. YOU WILL BE INVINCIBLE FOR ALL CREATURES OF THE THREE LOKAS, EXCEPT HUMANS. NO DEVA, ASURA, RAKSHASA, YAKSHA, GANDHARVA, APSARA OR ANY ANIMAL FORM WILL BE ABLE TO KILL YOU.

THANK YOU, LORD.

I WILL BE IMMORTAL NOW! I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM MERE HUMANS!



## KUBERA

SOON, RAVANA ATTACKED LANKA WITH A HUGE ARMY.

KUBERA!  
SURRENDER NOW  
AND I WILL LET YOU AND  
YOUR YAKSHAS LEAVE.  
OTHERWISE, I WILL  
KILL EVERYONE.

WE MUST LEAVE LANKA  
IMMEDIATELY. WE CANNOT  
DEFEND OUR CITY AGAINST  
SUCH A HORDE. RAVANA  
IS MERCILESS.

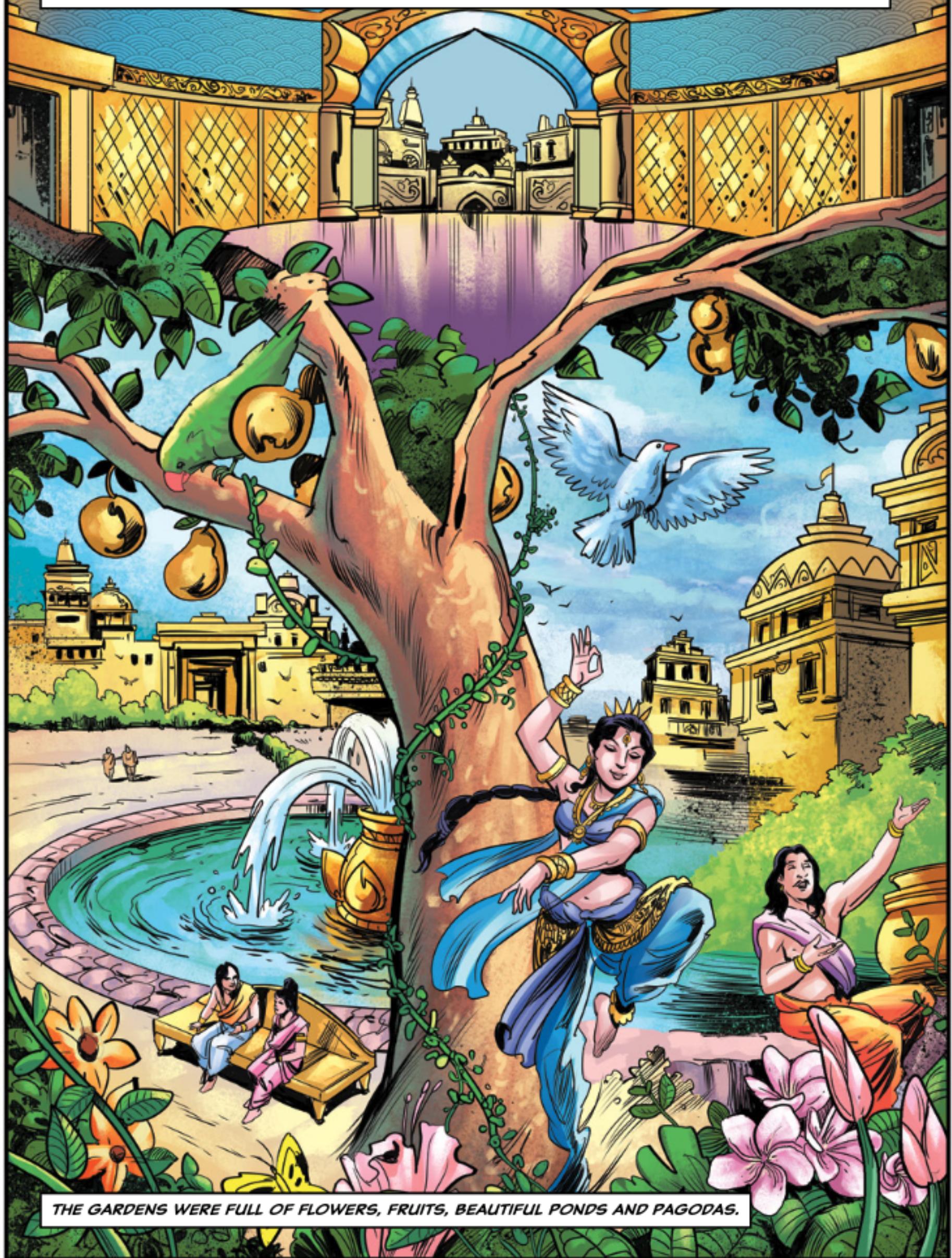
KUBERA TOOK HIS YAKSHAS AND FLEW NORTH TO THE HIGHEST REACHES OF THE HIMALAYAS.

WE  
WILL BUILD  
A NEW CITY  
HERE CALLED  
ALAKAPURI.

ALL THE DEVAS WELCOMED HIM. THEY SHOWERED HIM WITH BLESSINGS AND TREASURES.

KUBERA,  
WE WILL BUILD A  
GREAT CITY FOR  
YOU HERE.

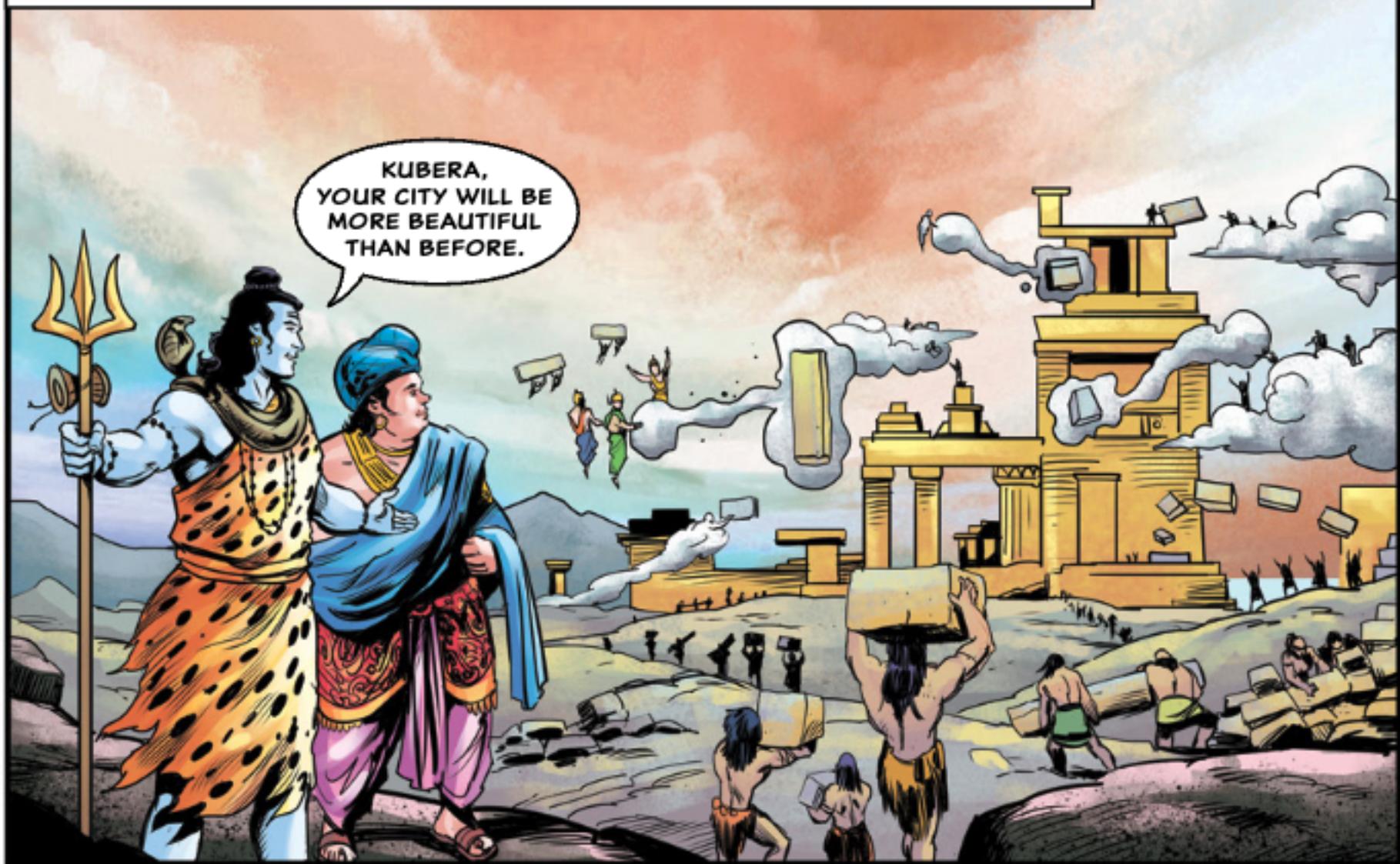
SOON ALAKAPURI BECAME A GLITTERING, MAGNIFICENT COURT. MUSICIANS, DANCERS, ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN FLOURISHED IN ALAKAPURI. THE BEST APSARAS AND GANDHARVAS RESIDED THERE.



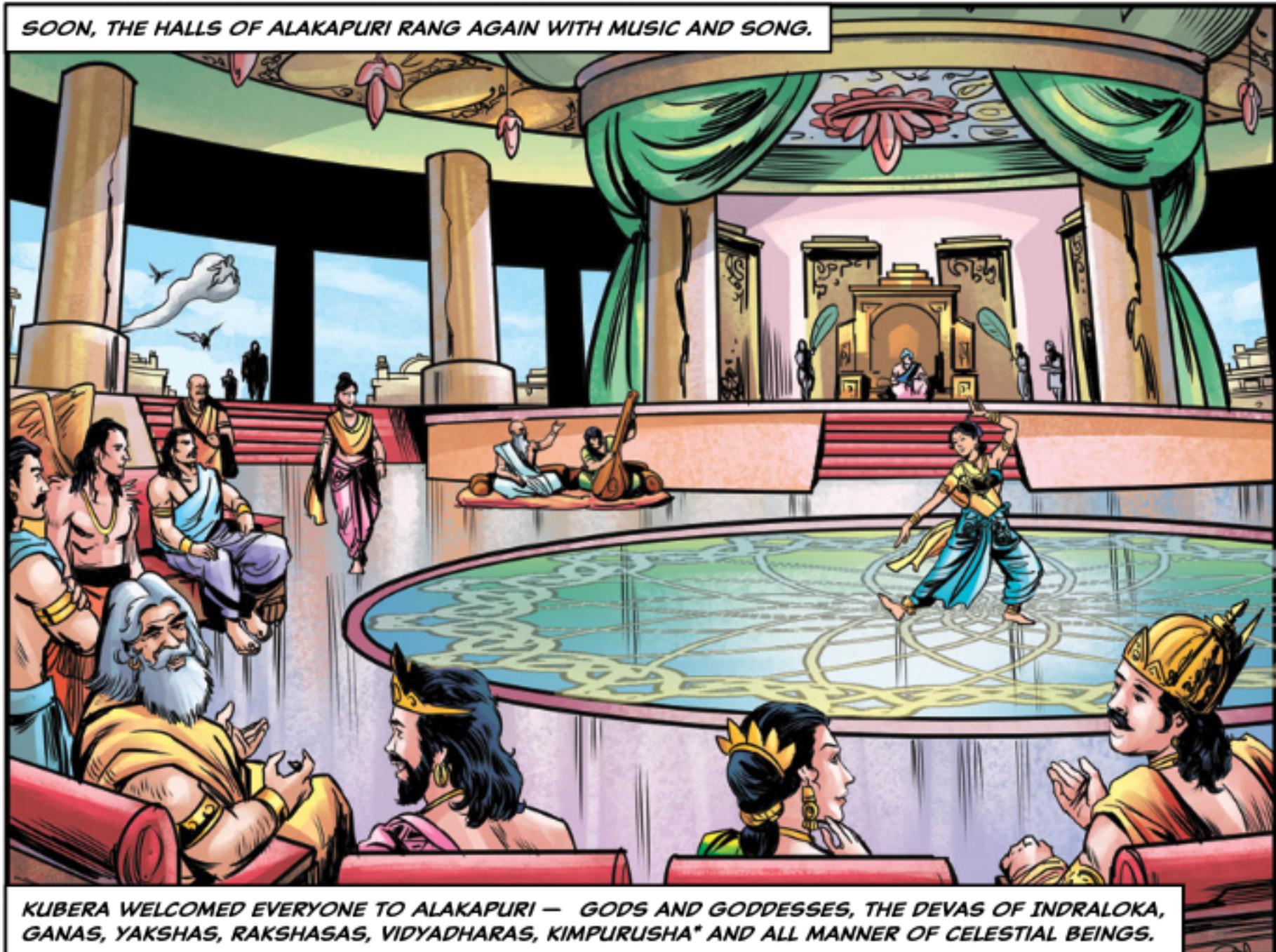
## KUBERA



THE YAKSHAS REBUILT ALAKAPURI WITH THE HELP OF THE DEVAS AND SHIVA'S GANAS.



SOON, THE HALLS OF ALAKAPURI RANG AGAIN WITH MUSIC AND SONG.



KUBERA WELCOMED EVERYONE TO ALAKAPURI — GODS AND GODDESSES, THE DEVAS OF INDRALOKA, YAKSHAS, RAKSHASAS, VIDYADHARAS, KIMPURUSHAS\* AND ALL MANNER OF CELESTIAL BEINGS.

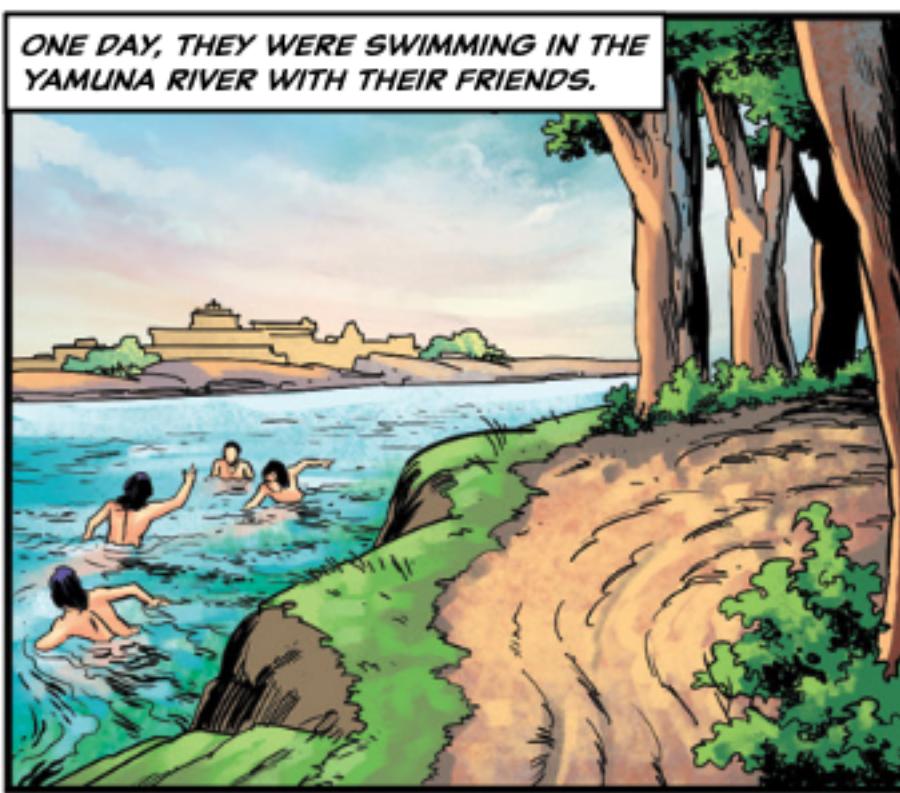
\*ATTENDANTS OF KUBERA WITH HUMAN BODIES AND LION HEADS

# THE SONS OF KUBERA

NALAKUBERA AND MANIGRIVA WERE THE SONS OF KUBERA AND RIDDHI. THEY WERE TALL AND HANDSOME, ALWAYS BRIMMING WITH MISCHIEF.



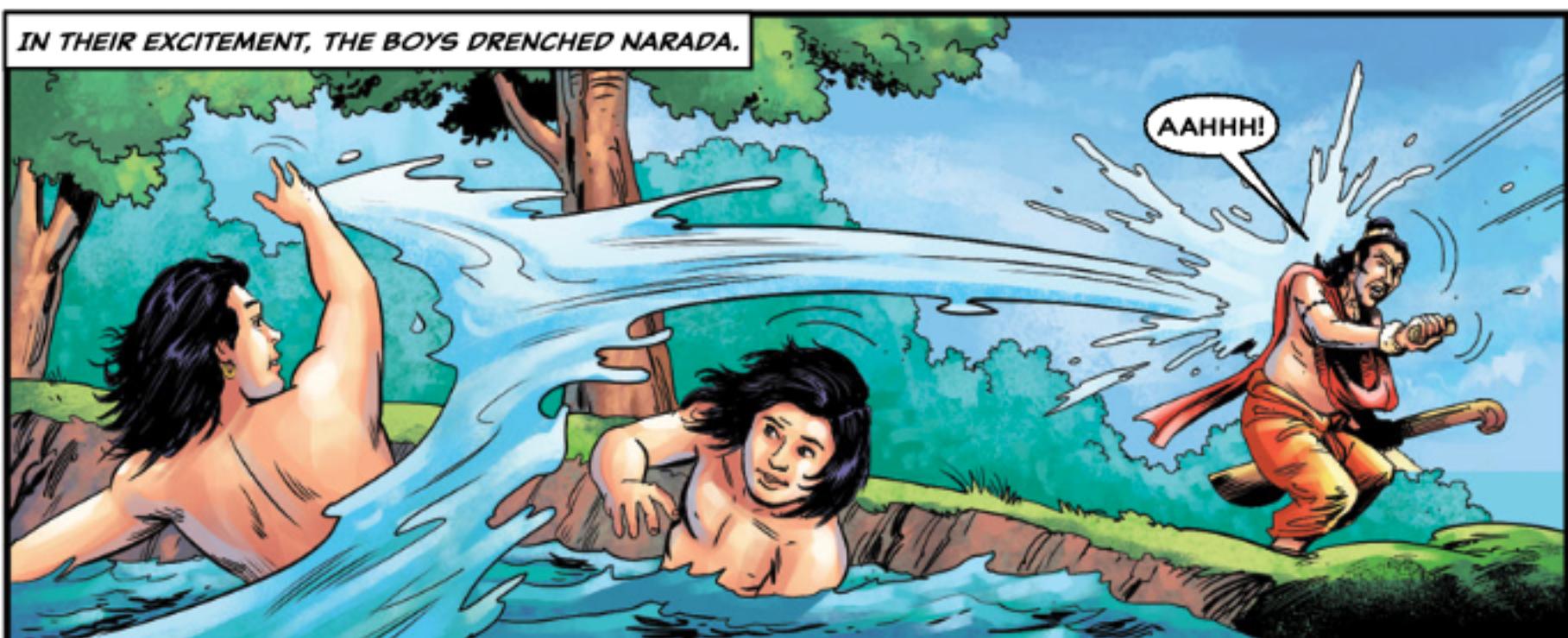
ONE DAY, THEY WERE SWIMMING IN THE YAMUNA RIVER WITH THEIR FRIENDS.



JUST THEN, SAGE NARADA HAPPENED TO WALK BY.



IN THEIR EXCITEMENT, THE BOYS DRENCHED NARADA.



NARADA WAS FURIOUS BUT THE BOYS LAUGHED.

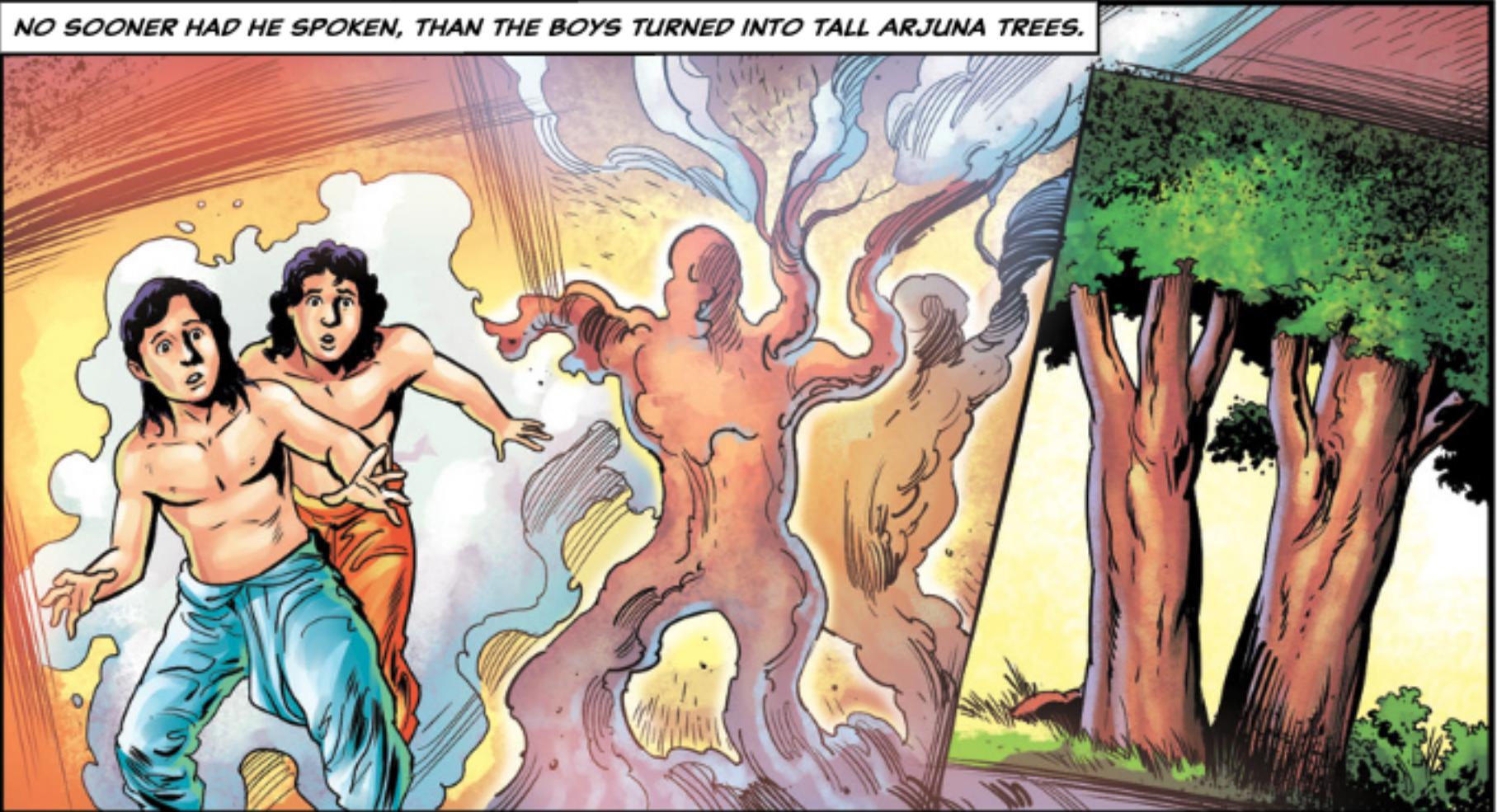
HA HA!

IT'S  
JUST WATER, IT  
WILL DRY SOON,  
GURUJI.

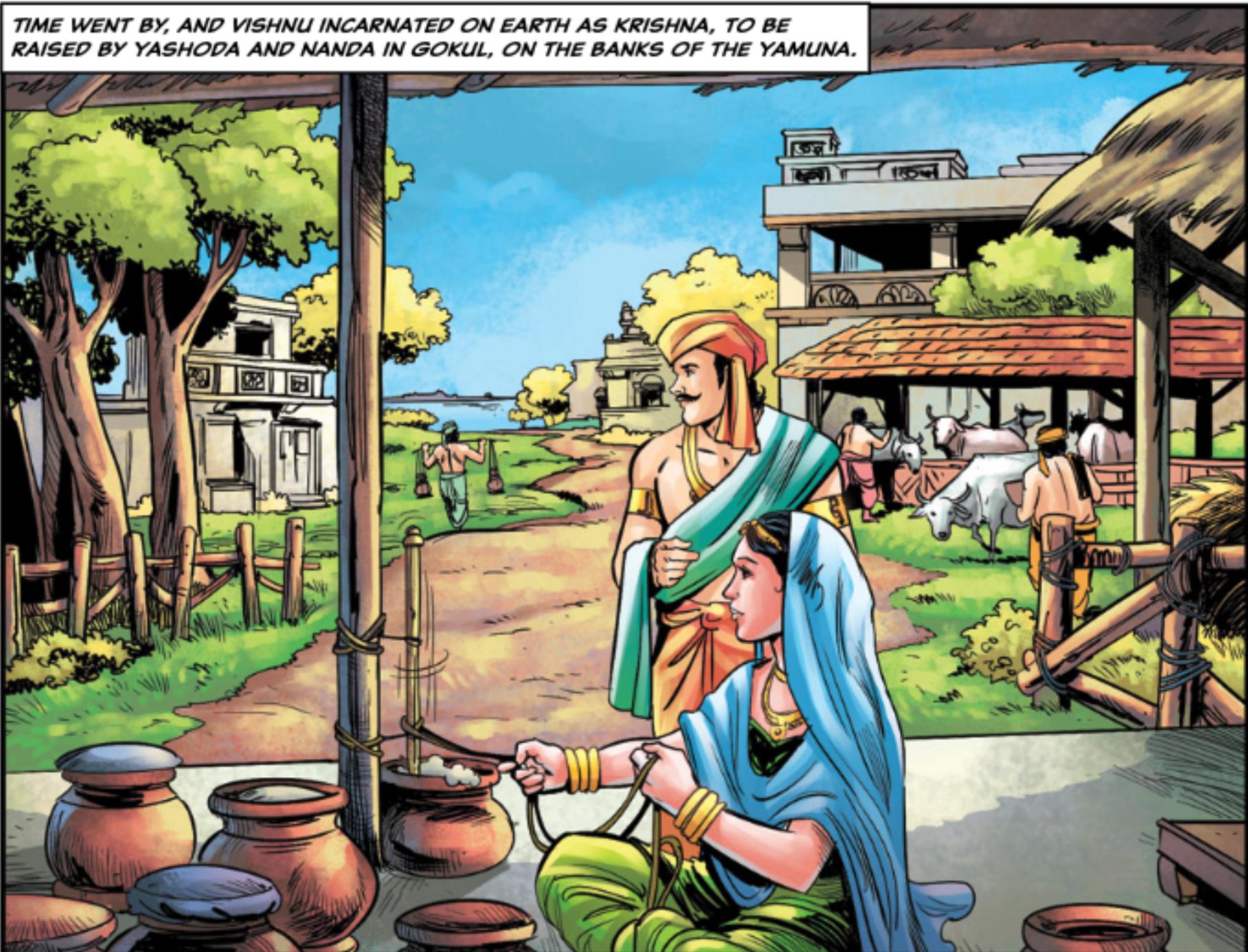
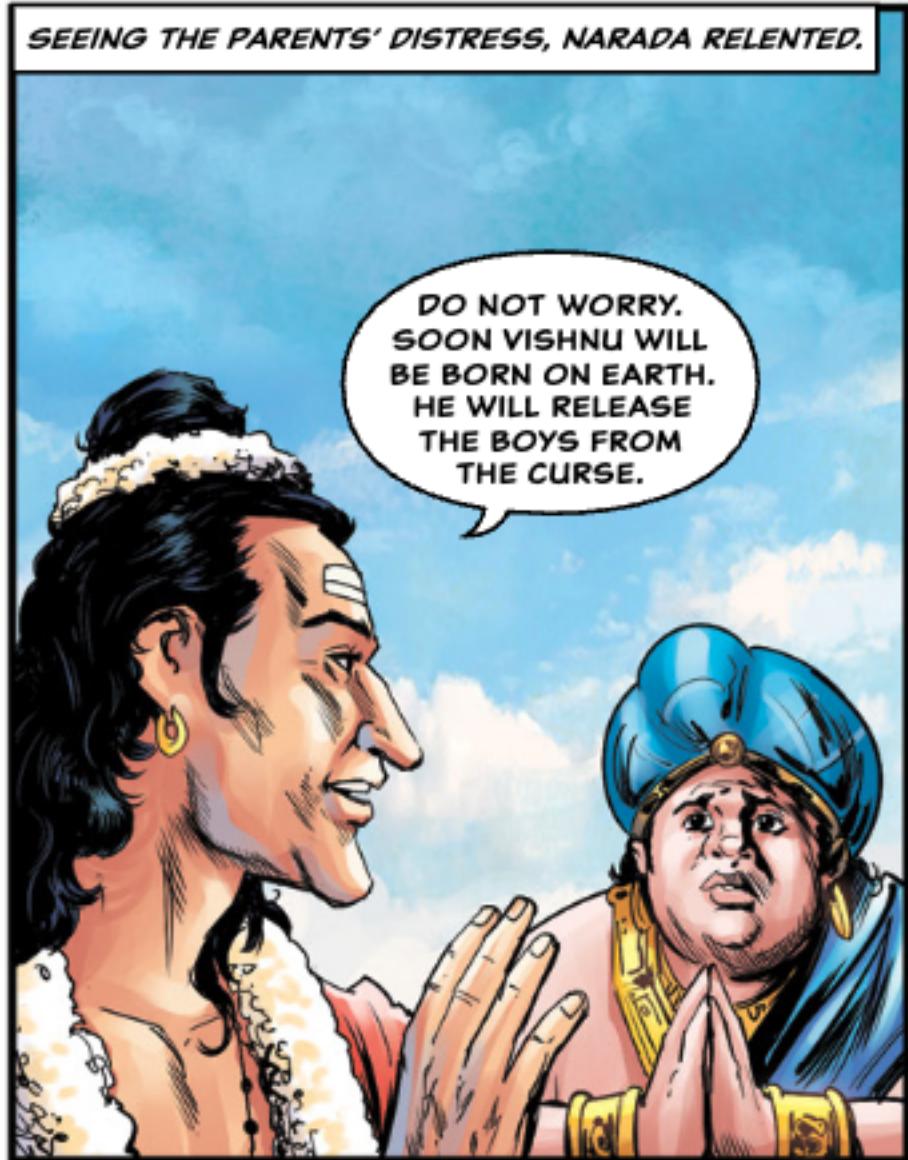
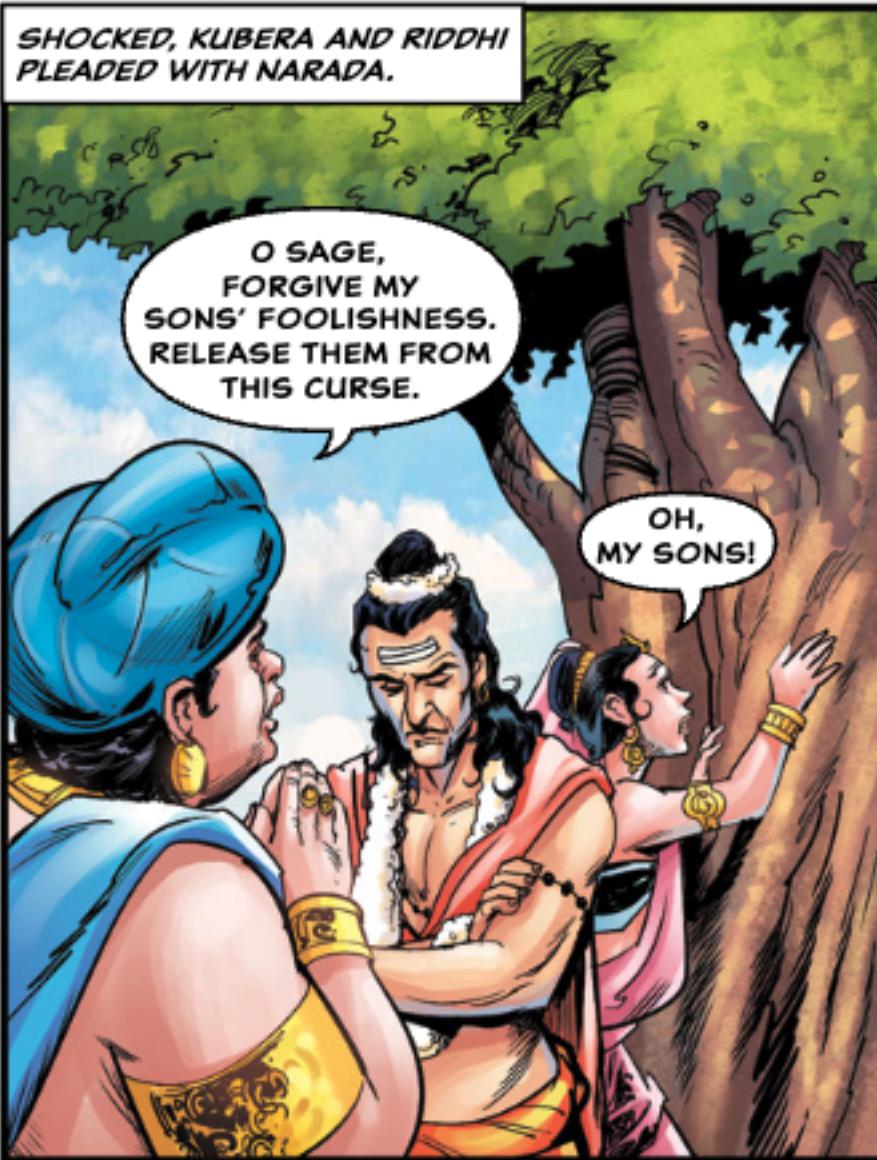
WHAT  
ILL-MANNERED  
CHILDREN!



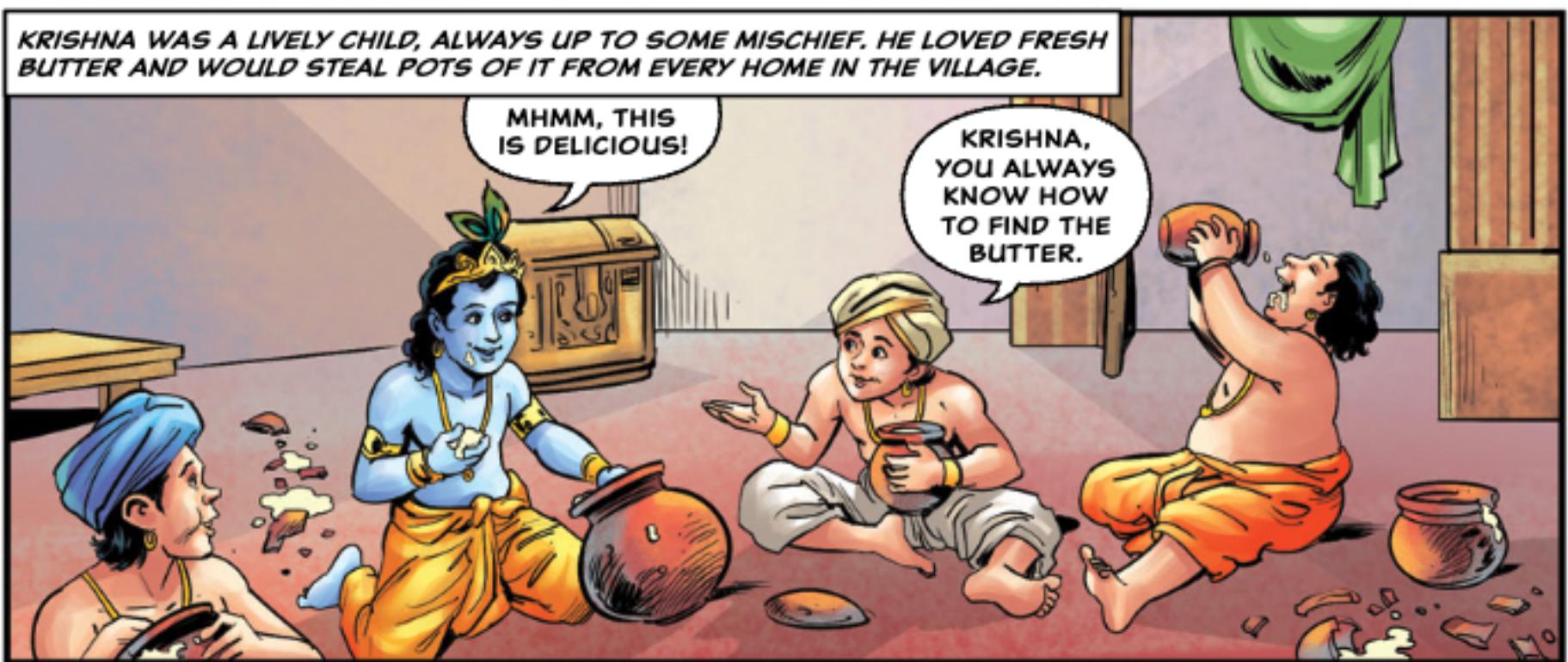
NO SOONER HAD HE SPOKEN, THAN THE BOYS TURNED INTO TALL ARJUNA TREES.



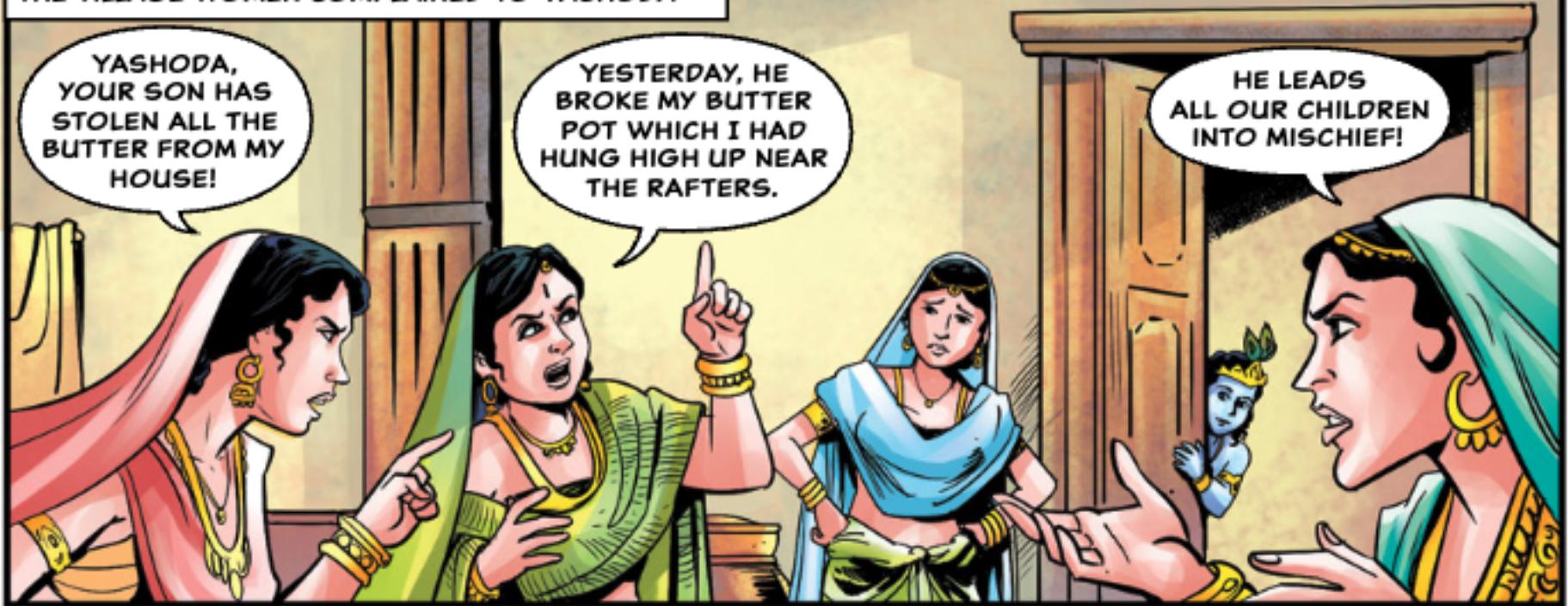
## THE SONS OF KUBERA



KRISHNA WAS A LIVELY CHILD, ALWAYS UP TO SOME MISCHIEF. HE LOVED FRESH BUTTER AND WOULD STEAL POTS OF IT FROM EVERY HOME IN THE VILLAGE.



THE VILLAGE WOMEN COMPLAINED TO YASHODA —



AFTER THE WOMEN LEFT, YASHODA SCOLDED KRISHNA —



KRISHNA LED HIS MOTHER A MERRY CHASE.



## THE SONS OF KUBERA

YASHODA MANAGED TO CATCH HIM. SHE THEN TIED HIM TO A HEAVY STONE MORTAR\*.

JUST STAY HERE! I DO NOT WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE COMPLAINTS ABOUT YOU.

BUT AFTER A WHILE —

WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?

THUDDDD!

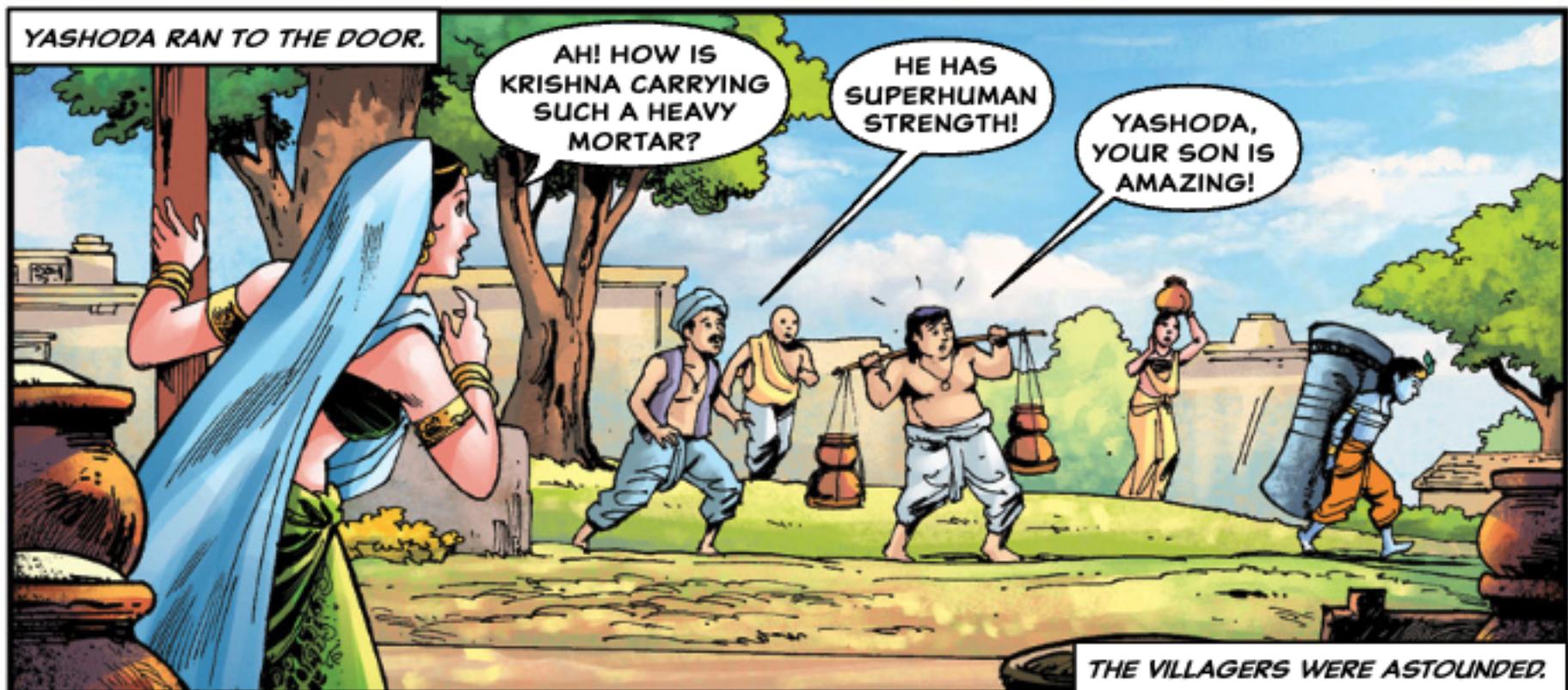


YASHODA RAN TO THE DOOR.

AH! HOW IS KRISHNA CARRYING SUCH A HEAVY MORTAR?

HE HAS SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH!

YASHODA, YOUR SON IS AMAZING!



KRISHNA WAS MAKING HIS WAY TO THE RIVER, BUT —

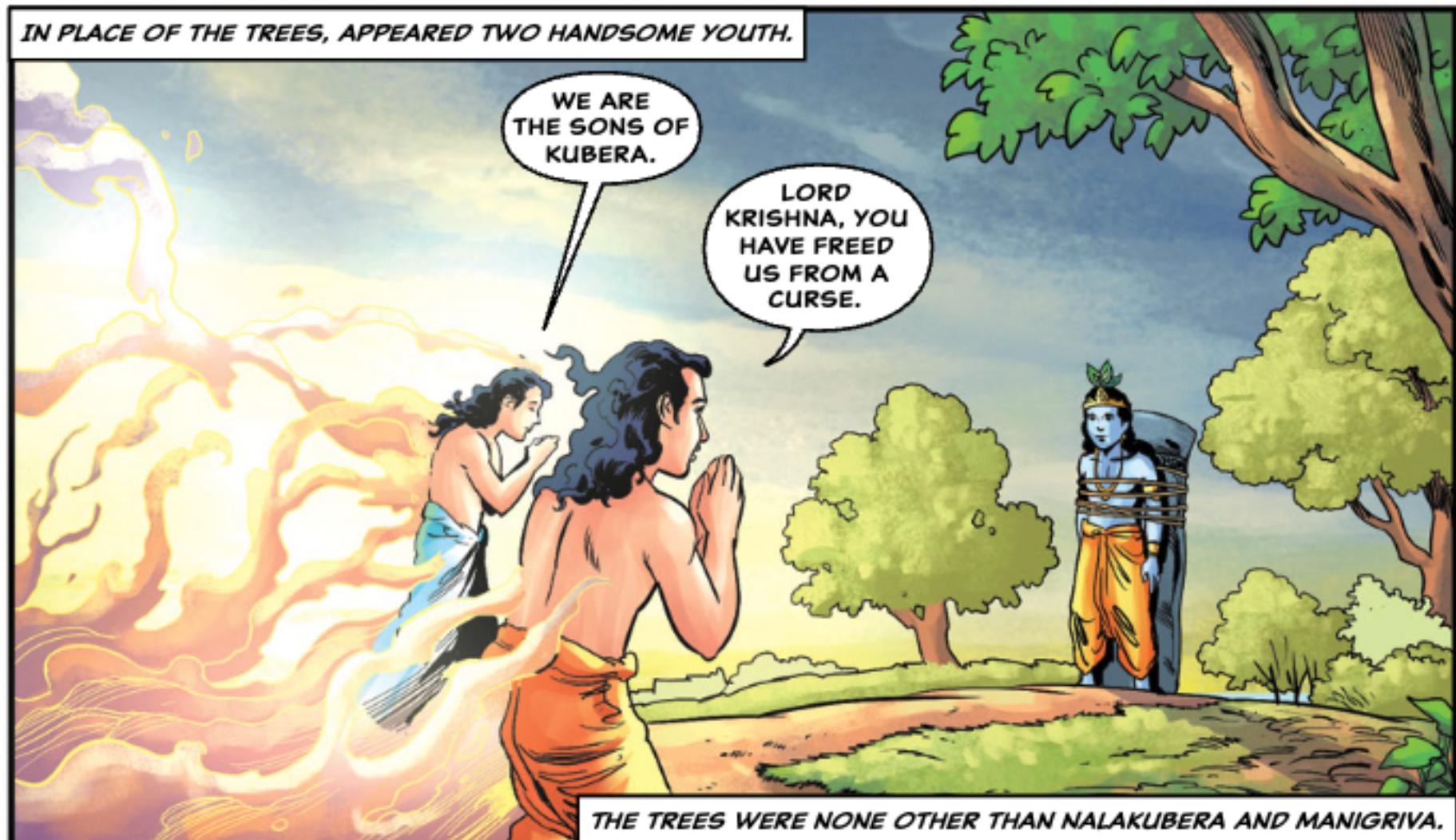
OH, I AM STUCK BETWEEN THESE TWO TREES!



\*HEAVY STONE USED TO POUND SPICES



IN PLACE OF THE TREES, APPEARED TWO HANDSOME YOUTH.



THE TREES WERE NONE OTHER THAN NALAKUBERA AND MANIGRIVA.

## THE SONS OF KUBERA

THE VILLAGERS COULD NOT BELIEVE THEIR EYES.

KRISHNA  
IS VISHNU  
INCARNATE!

YASHODA,  
YOU ARE BLESSED  
TO HAVE HIM.



MANIGRIVA AND NALAKUBERA FLEW HOME TO ALAKAPURI.

BROTHER,  
THERE IS OUR  
HOME!

HOW I  
HAVE LONGED  
TO SEE IT!



THEIR PARENTS WERE OVERJOYED TO SEE THEM.



# AMBIKA

IN JAIN MYTHOLOGY, EACH TIRTHANKARA\* HAS AN ATTENDANT YAKSHI COUPLE. HERE IS THE STORY OF AMBIKA, THE YAKSHI ATTENDANT OF THE 22ND TIRTHANKARA, NEMINATHA.

LONG AGO, IN A TOWN CALLED GIRINAGAR, THERE LIVED A MAN CALLED SOMASURAM AND HIS WIFE, AGNILA. ONE DAY —

I WOULD LIKE TO PERFORM THE SHRAADH<sup>†</sup> PUJA FOR MY FATHER. I WILL FETCH THE BRAHMINS. MEANWHILE, PLEASE PREPARE THE FOOD FOR THE PRASADA.<sup>\*\*</sup>

I WILL.

AGNILA PREPARED A DELICIOUS FEAST. JUST THEN —

ALMS FOR THE POOR!

ONE MUST NEVER TURN AWAY A MONK SEEKING ALMS.

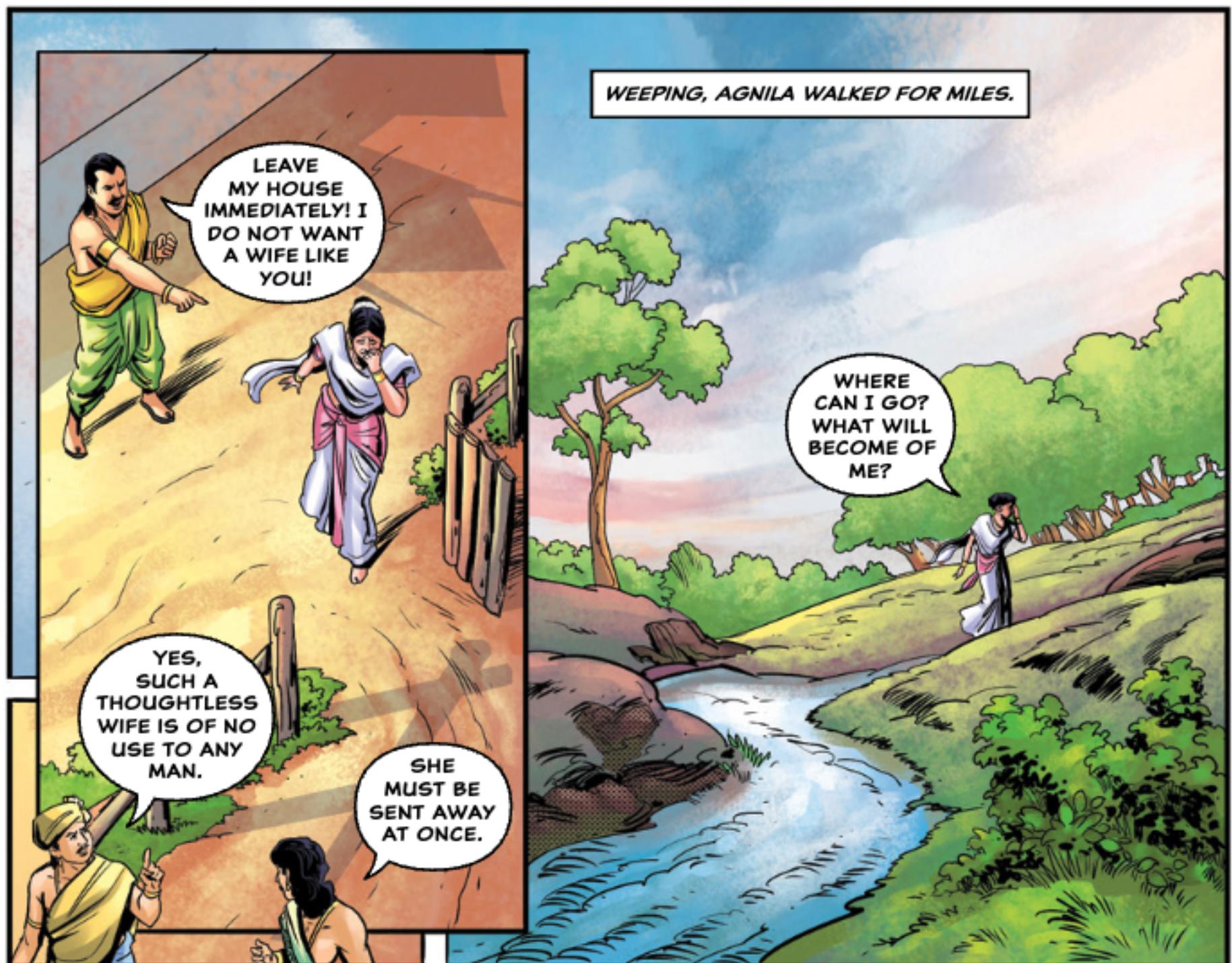
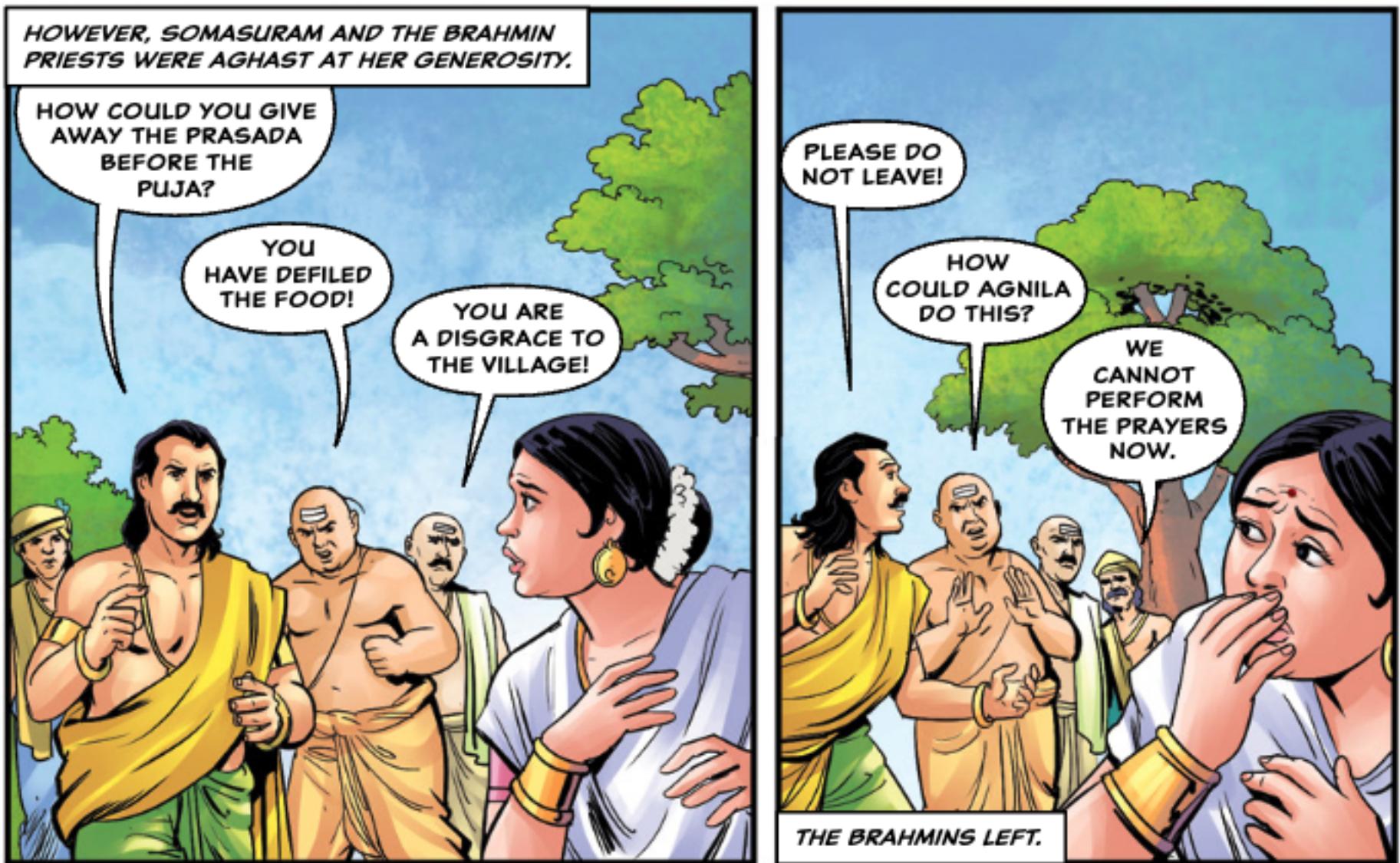
A JAIN MONK WAS AT THE DOOR. HE WAS NONE OTHER THAN NEMINATHA.

ONE MOMENT, SIR, I AM BRINGING SOME FOOD.

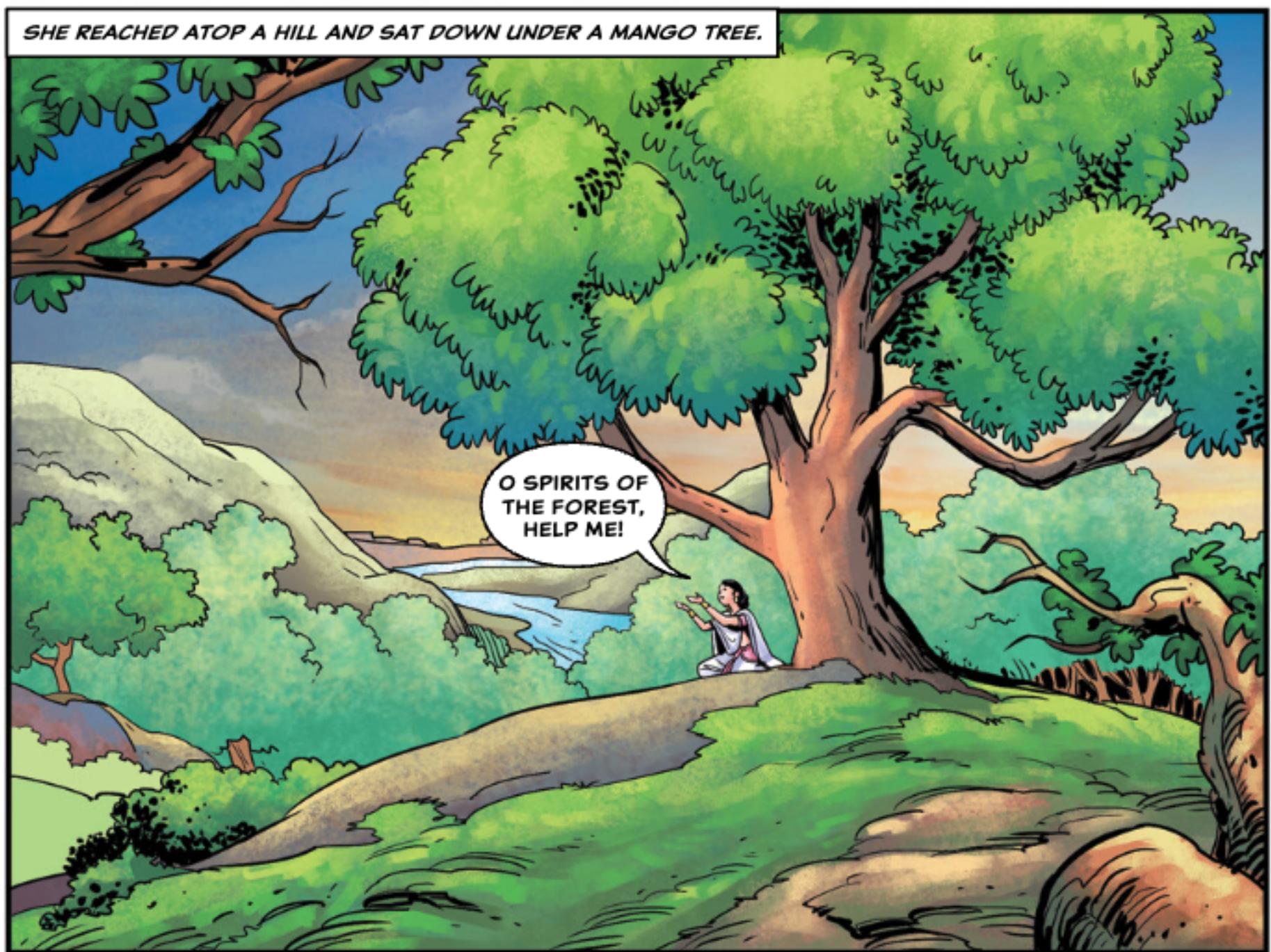
SHE GAVE SOME OF THE HALWA-POORI<sup>\*\*</sup> MADE FOR THE PUJA TO THE MONK.

BLESS YOU, DEAR LADY.

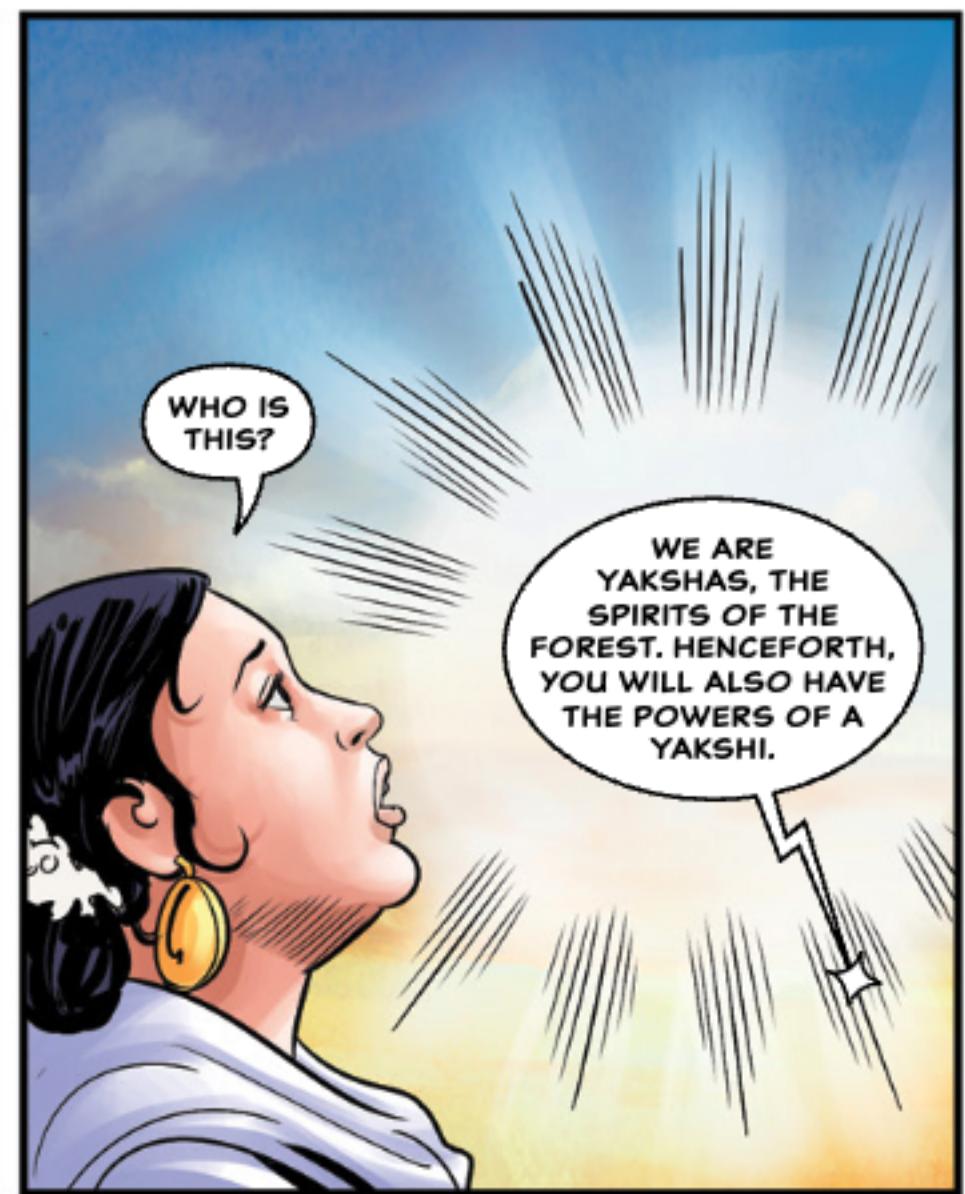
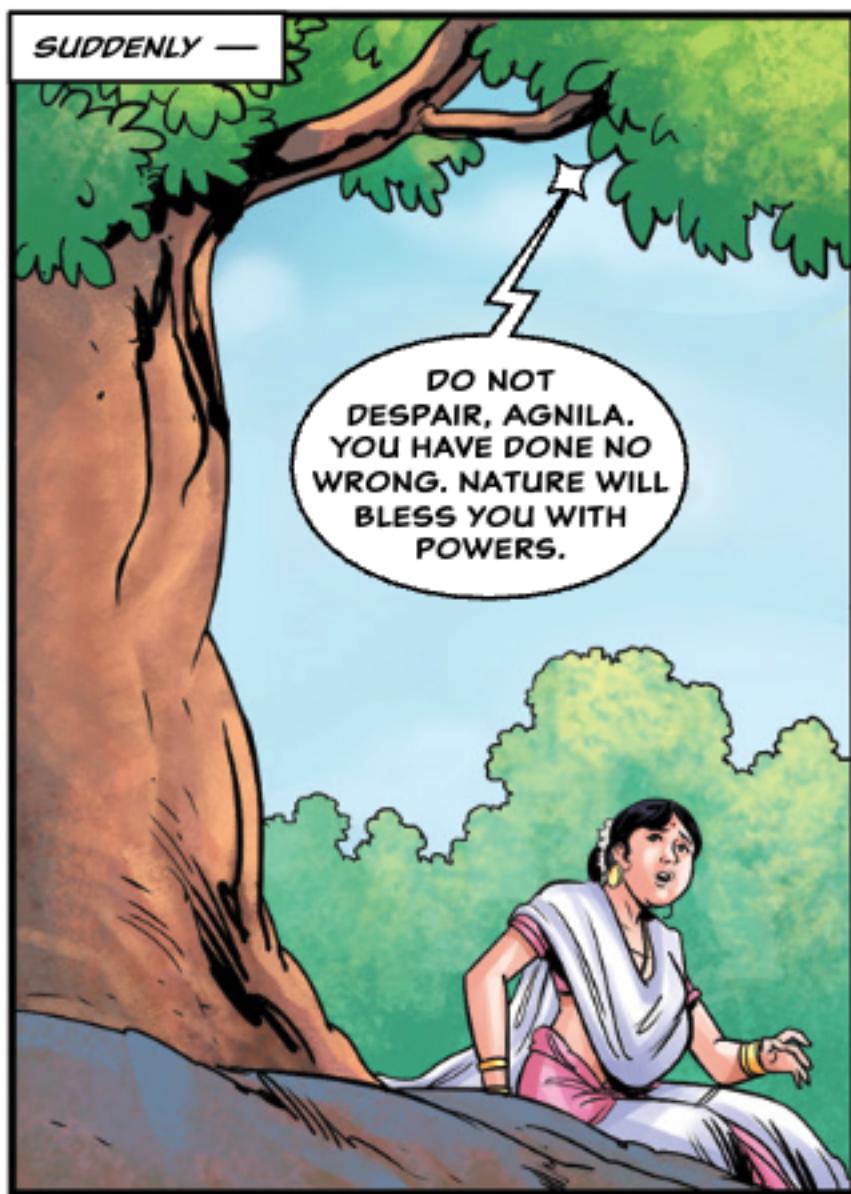




SHE REACHED ATOP A HILL AND SAT DOWN UNDER A MANGO TREE.



SUDDENLY —



AGNILA LOOKED IN WONDER AS THE TREE ABOVE HER BECAME LADEN WITH FRUIT.



WHATEVER SHE TOUCHED,  
BURST INTO BLOOM.



HOW  
STRANGE!  
I SEEM TO  
HAVE MAGIC  
POWERS!



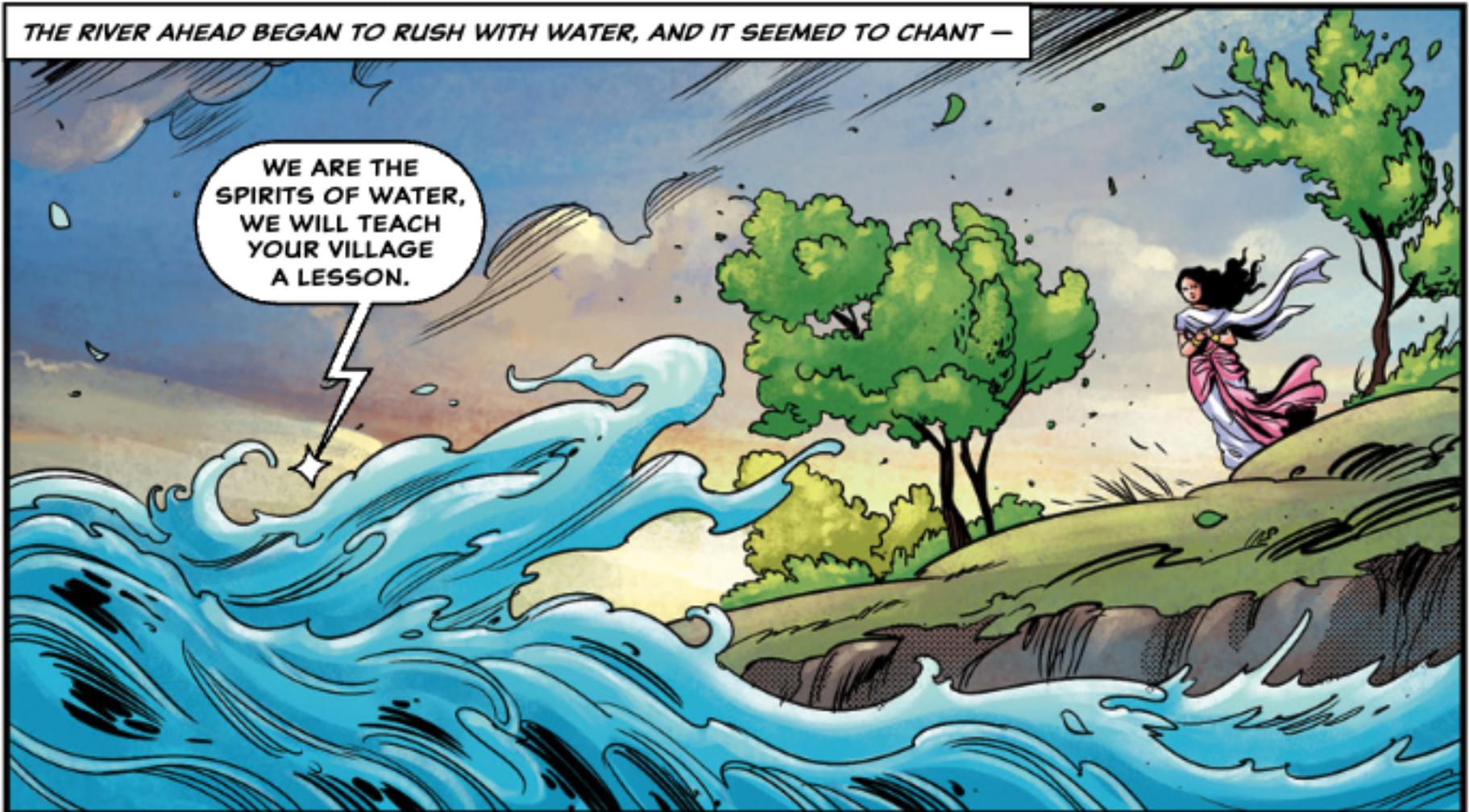
THE VOICE CAME AGAIN —

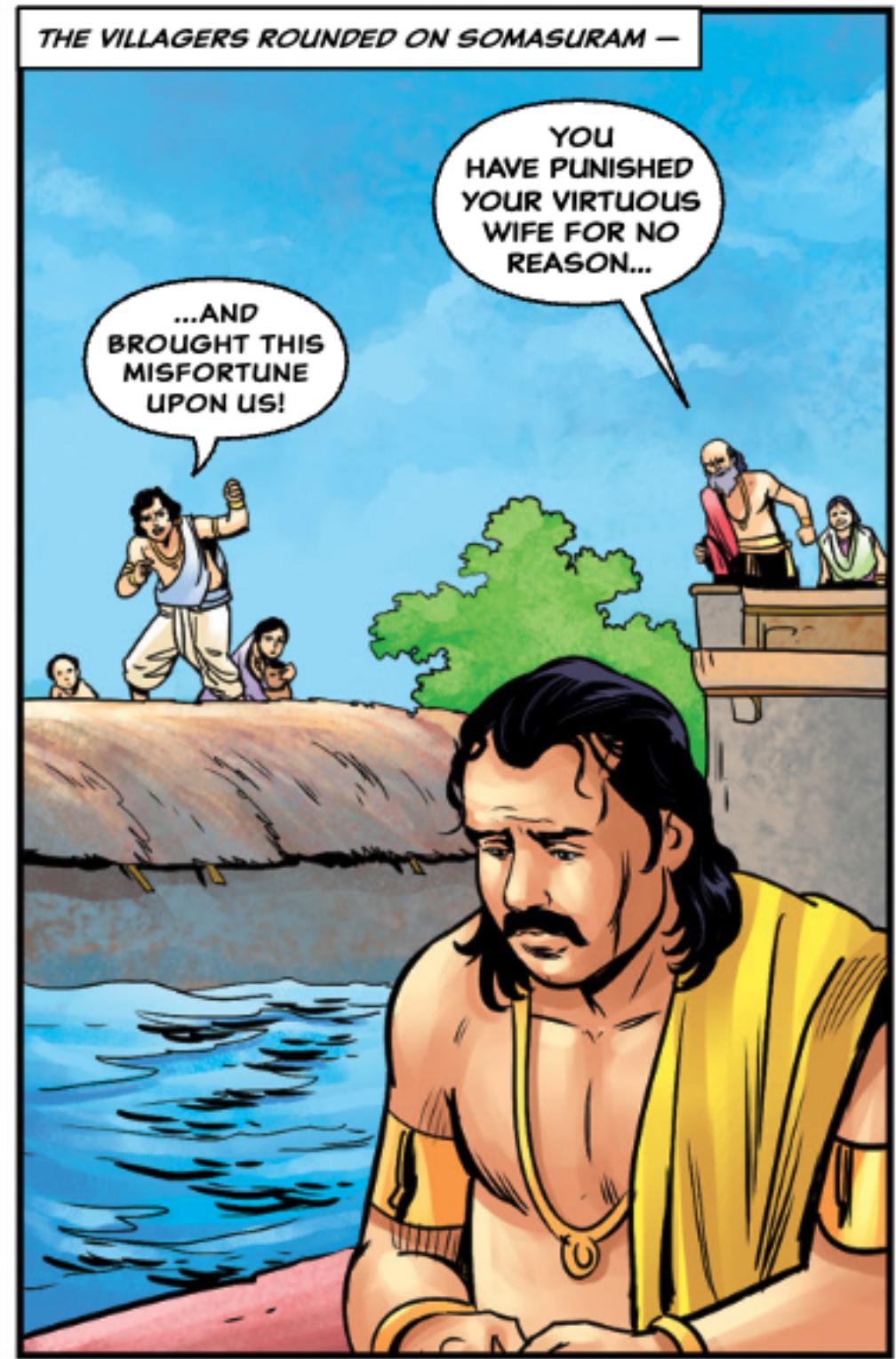
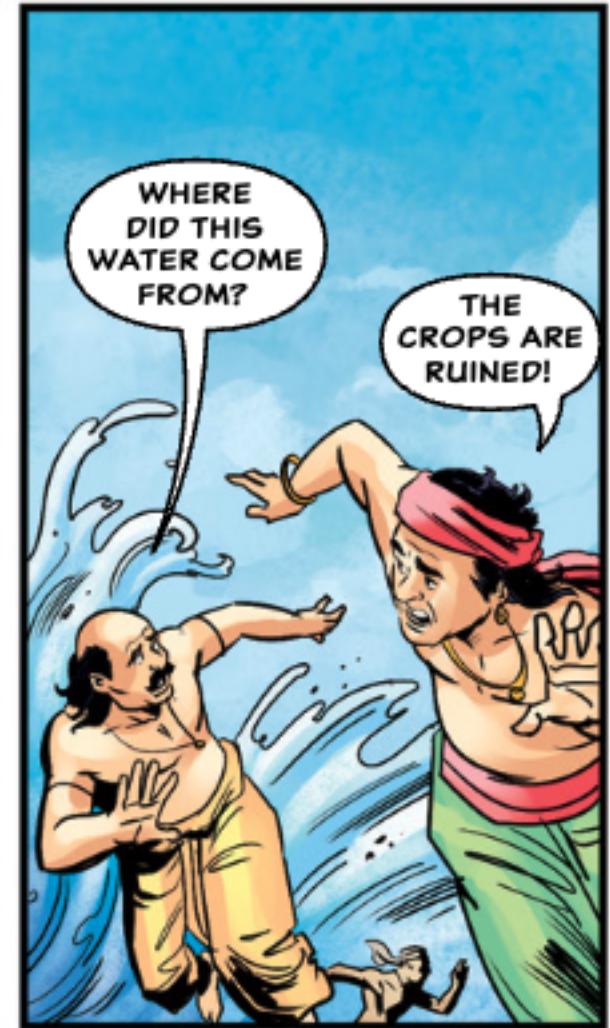
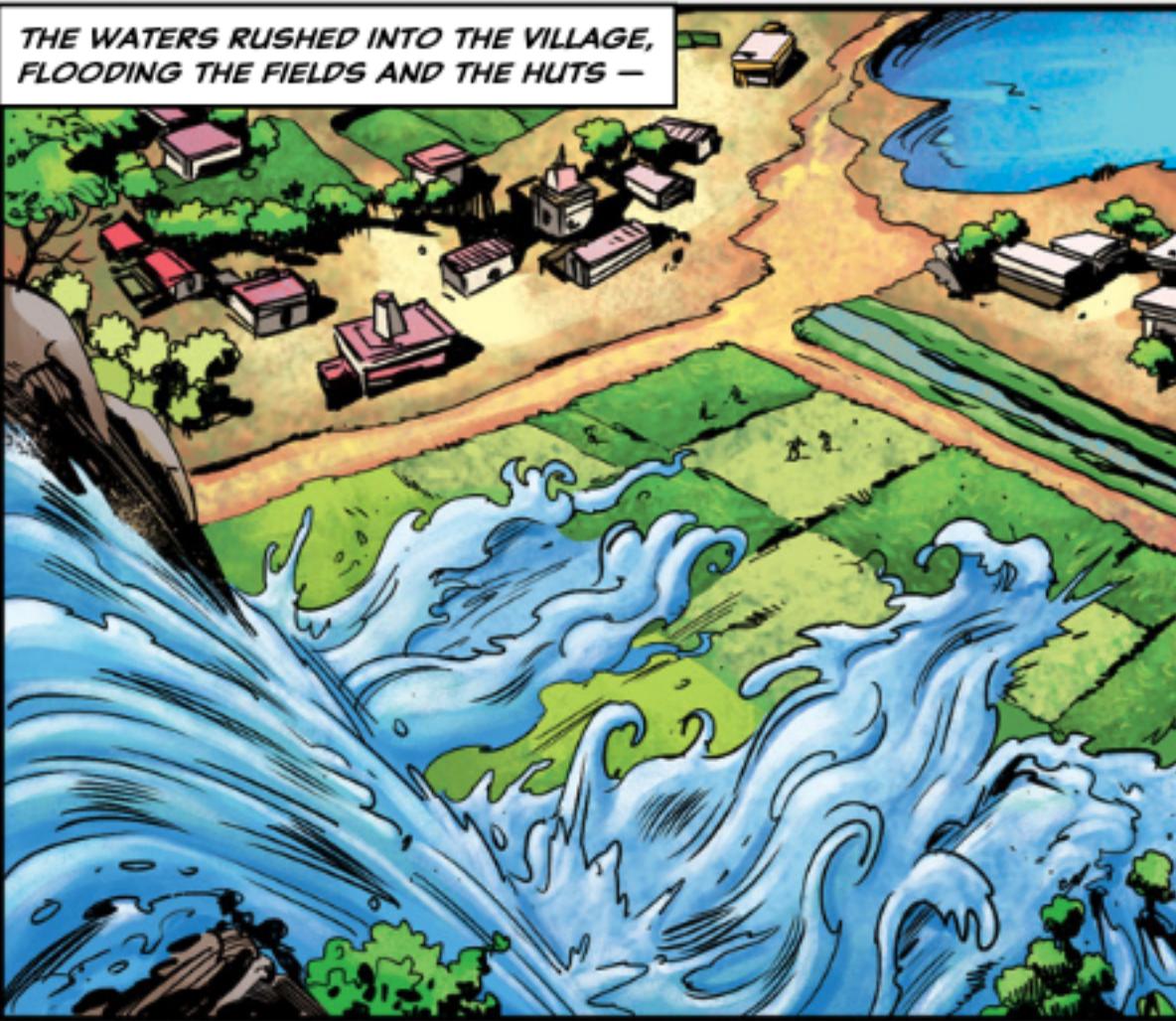
YES  
AGNILA, YOU  
HAVE BEEN GRANTED  
THE POWERS OF A  
YAKSHI. HENCEFORTH,  
YOU ARE THE YAKSHI,  
AMBIKA.



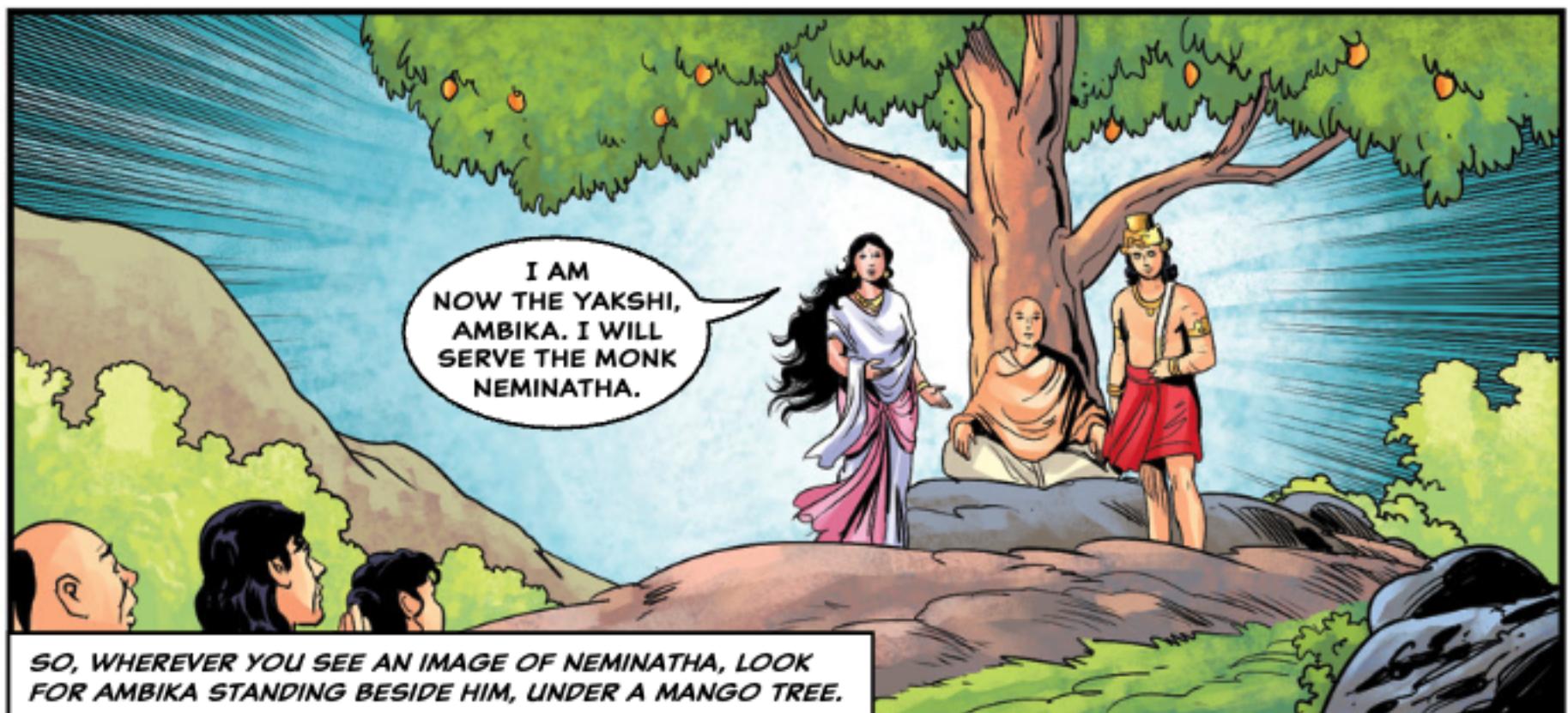
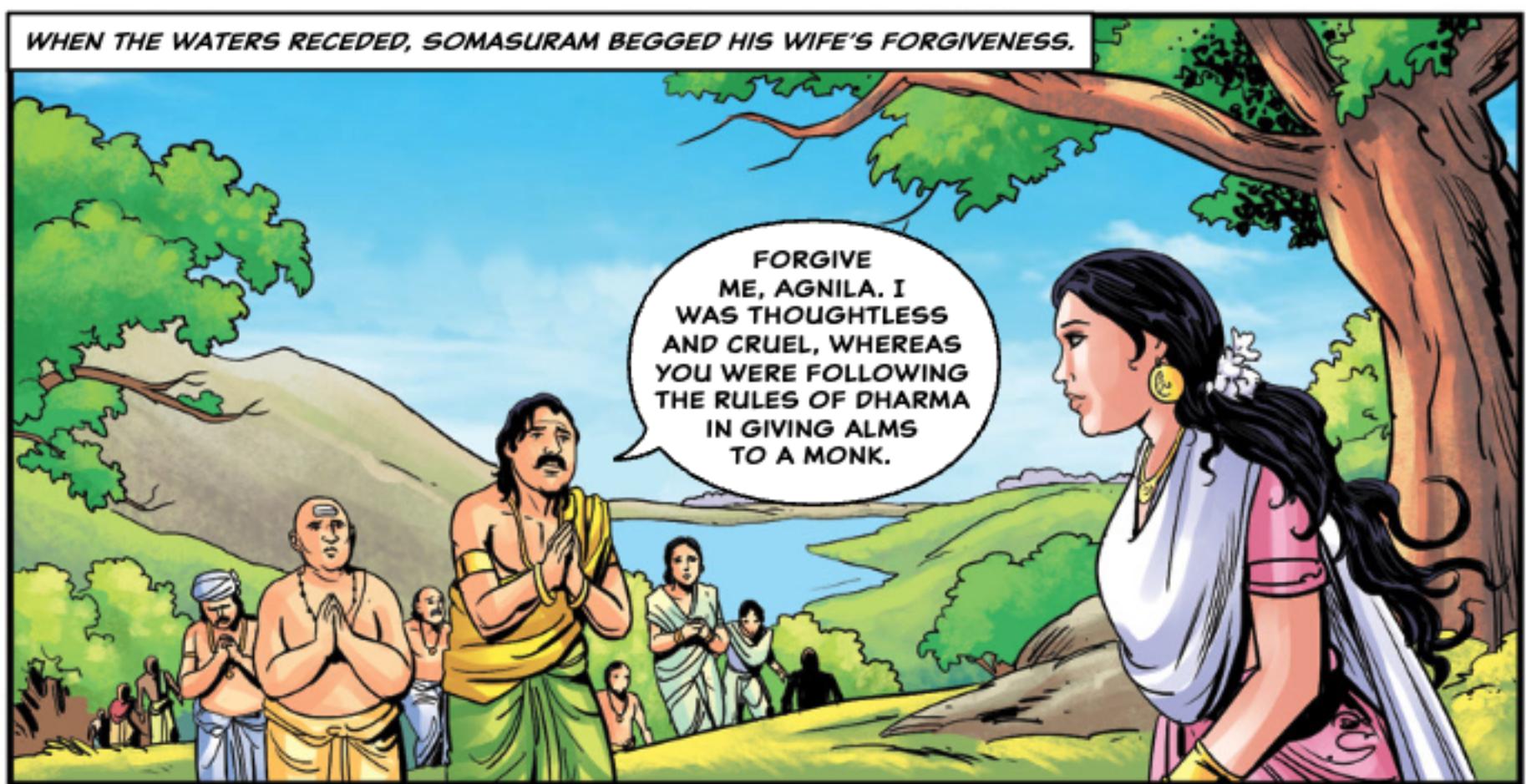
THE RIVER AHEAD BEGAN TO RUSH WITH WATER, AND IT SEEMED TO CHANT —

WE ARE THE  
SPIRITS OF WATER,  
WE WILL TEACH  
YOUR VILLAGE  
A LESSON.





WHEN THE WATERS RECEDED, SOMASURAM BEGGED HIS WIFE'S FORGIVENESS.



# Yakshas and Yakshis

These are the ancient spirits of nature, associated with wealth and fertility. They are believed to inhabit trees, rivers, mountains and other natural features. They can be benevolent or mischievous, granting favours to those they like, and punishing those who anger them. They are revered in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain mythology. Even today, tree shrines can be found in every Indian village. In Jain mythology, each of the 24 Tirthankaras has a yaksha and yakshi couple as his attendants and also a specific sacred tree. The attendant yakshis of the 22nd Tirthankara, Neminatha, were the yakshi, Ambika, and the yaksha, Gomedha. They are shown standing beside the Tirthankara under a tree laden with fruit.



All Buddhist shrines and Hindu temples have the figure of a yaksha or yakshi at the doorway for good fortune. Usually, this is a beautiful girl holding on to a branch of a flowering tree. The tree could be the Ashoka, Bakula, Mango, or any other flowering tree. This type of Yakshi is also known as a 'Shalabhanjika'. She is considered a symbol of fertility and prosperity.

The most well-known of the Yakshas is Kubera, bringer of wealth and prosperity. He is the treasurer of the gods and is said to reside in the mythical city of Alakapuri, in the Himalayas. He is also considered as the king of Yakshas. He is the guardian deity, or dikpala, of the northern direction. He is short with a pot-belly and is always shown with a pot of gold in one hand and a club in the other.



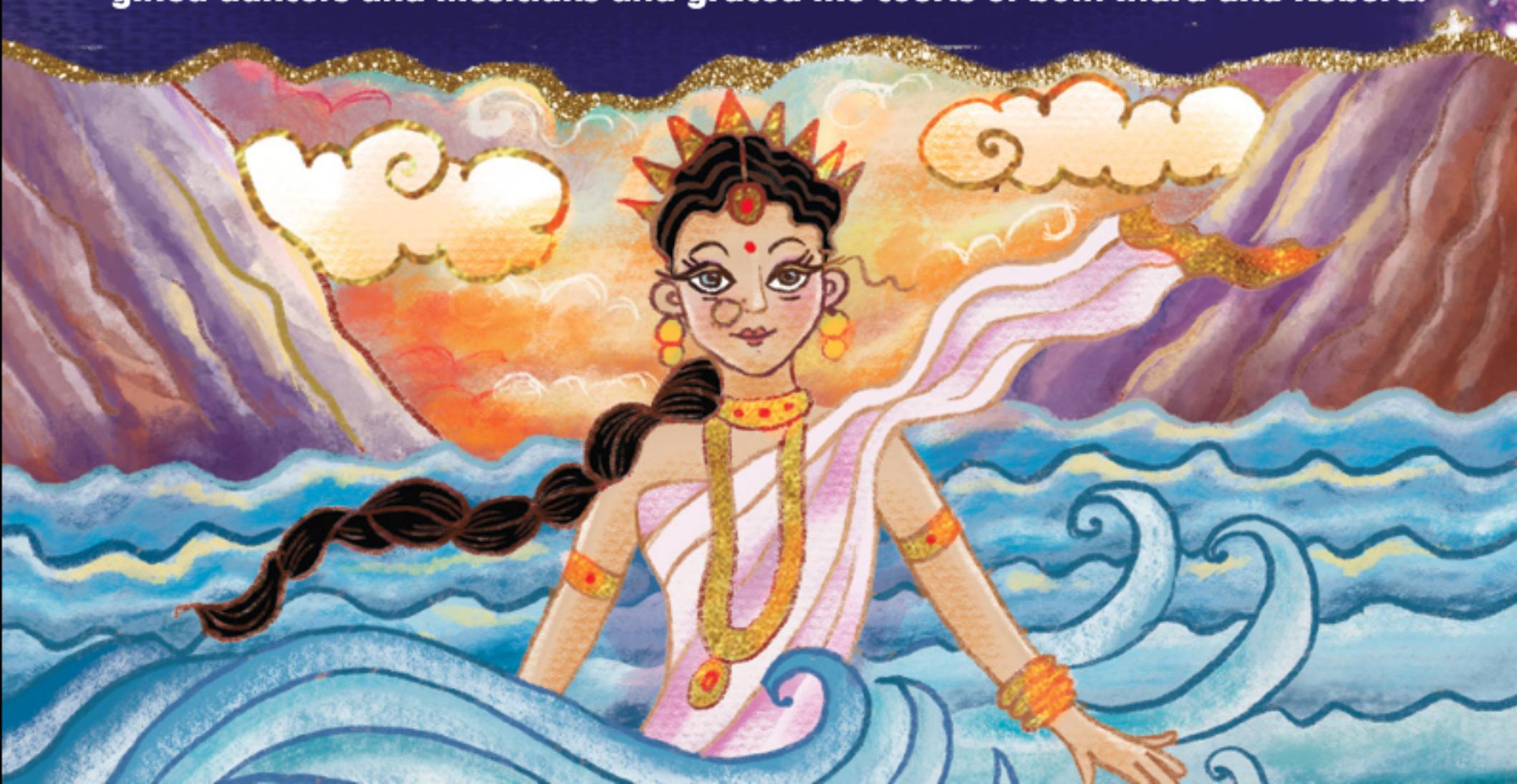
# Gandharvas

Gandharvas were the children of the sage, Kashyapa and his wife, Arista. They were imbued with magical powers like invisibility, changing form and creating illusions. They sang and played music beautifully. They travelled constantly between the three lokas as messengers.



# Apsaras

During the churning of the ocean, many wondrous creations emerged from the foaming waters. Among these were the apsaras, who were beautiful damsels who could cast a spell on gods, demons and humans. They were gifted dancers and musicians and graced the courts of both Indra and Kubera.



# Vidyadharas

Vidyadharas were semi-divine beings, widely respected for their knowledge. They were learned in all kinds of subjects from medicine to magic. They were also skilled in the arts and attended Indra's court. They lived in the Himalayan region and possessed untold treasures. As they flew across the heavens with ease, they were also called 'sky-goers'.



# Kinnaras

Kinnaras are present in Hindu and Buddhist tales. They are part-bird, part-human, delicate creatures associated with music and love. They are like fairies, with wings to fly. They live in secret lands hidden away from everyone and are very hard to reach.



# HARITI

SOME YAKSHIS WERE FEARSOME OGRESSES, TILL THEY HAD A CHANGE OF HEART AND BECAME LOVING PROTECTORS. SUCH IS THE STORY OF HARITI.

ONE DAY, BUDDHA AND HIS FOLLOWERS REACHED A SMALL VILLAGE AT THE FOOT OF A MOUNTAIN.



HEARING OF BUDDHA'S ARRIVAL, THE VILLAGERS CAME TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS.



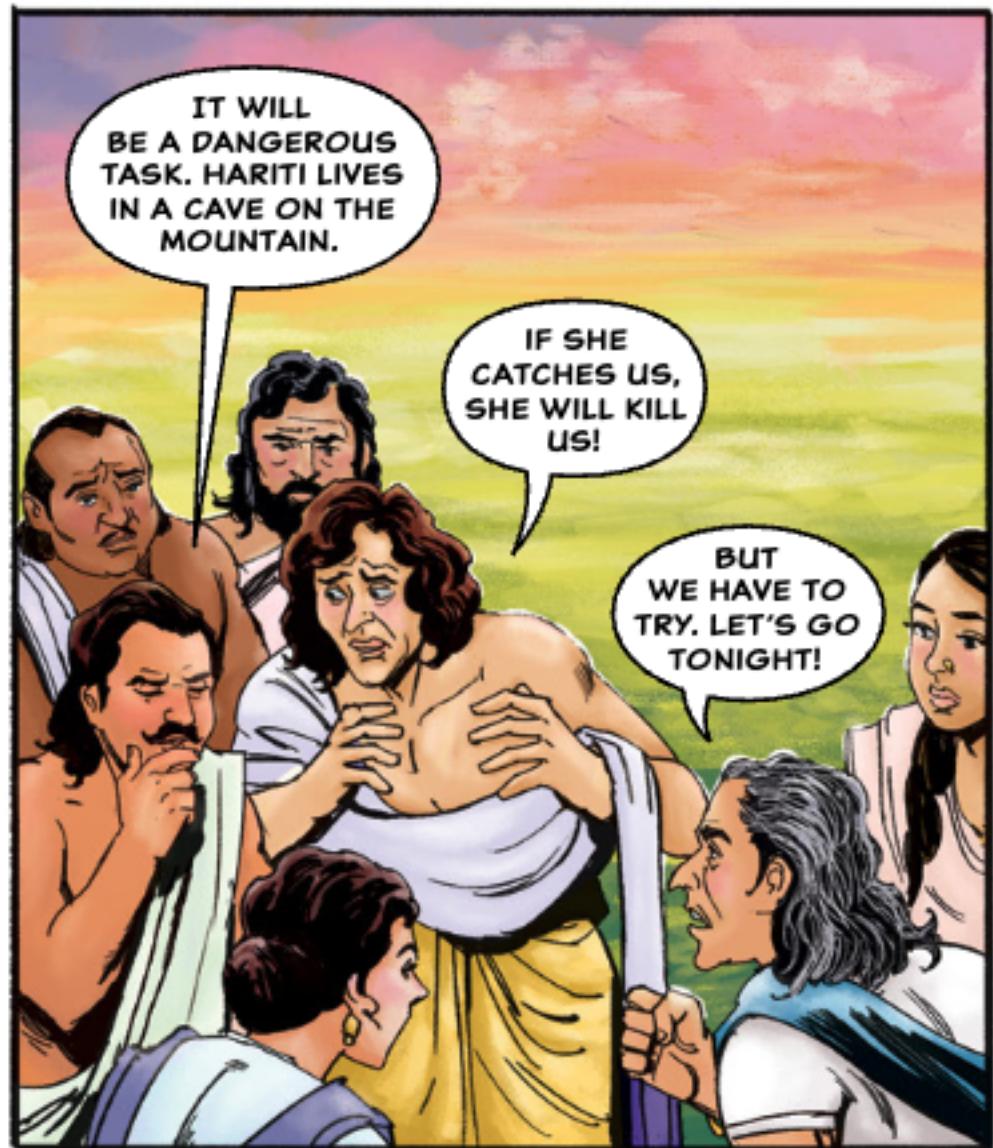
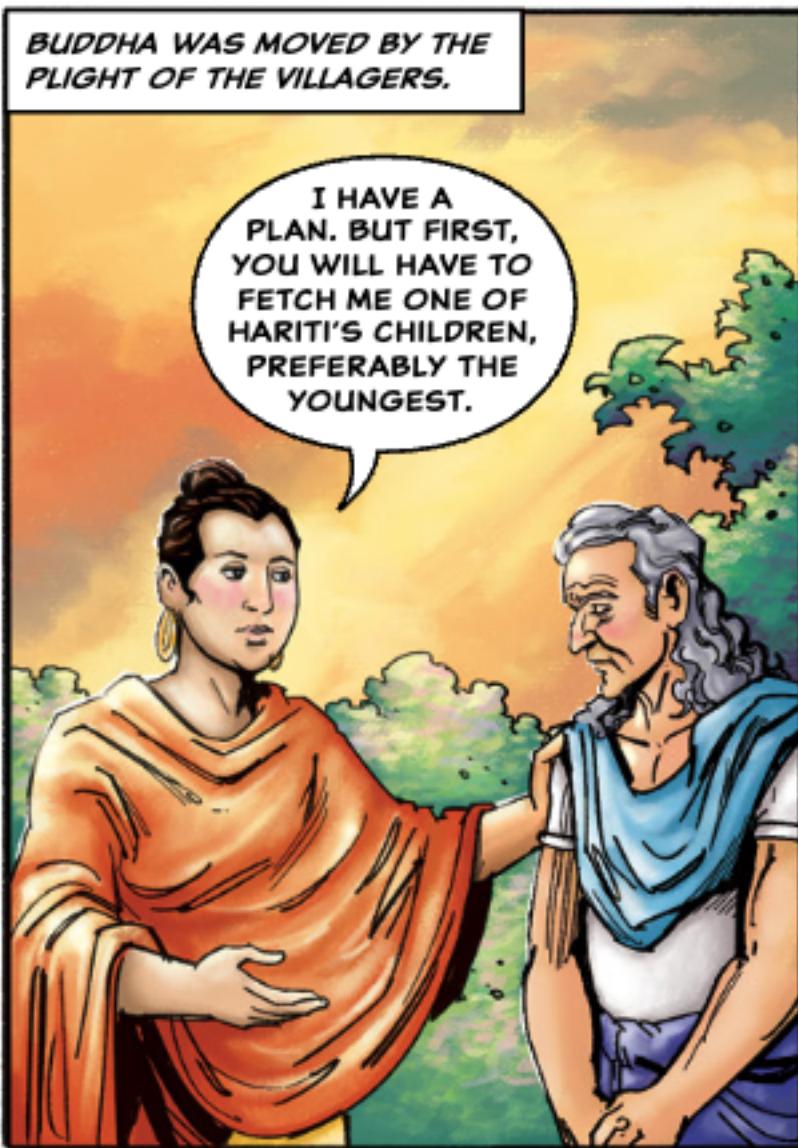
MANY MONTHS AGO, A FIERCE OGRESS NAMED HARITI CAME TO THIS MOUNTAIN. SHE FEEDS ON OUR CHILDREN.

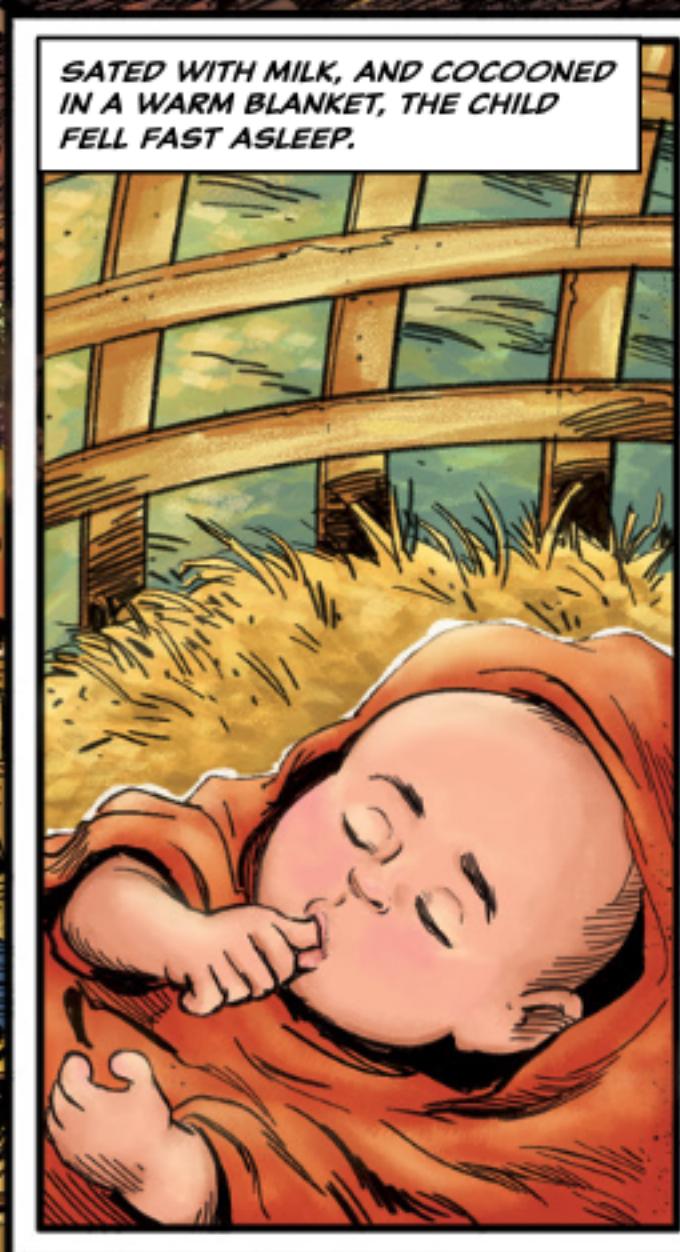
WE OFFERED OURSELVES TO HER BUT SHE ONLY WANTS CHILDREN.

EVEN THOUGH SHE HAS CHILDREN OF HER OWN, SHE FEELS NO MERCY FOR PARENTS WEEPING FOR THEIRS.



## HARITI





AS SOON AS DAWN BROKE, HARITI CAME HOWLING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

MY SON IS  
LOST! I WILL KILL  
WHOMEVER HAS  
TAKEN HIM!

SUDDENLY, SHE SAW BUDDHA IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD. HE WAS SMILING GENTLY, QUITE UNAFRAID.

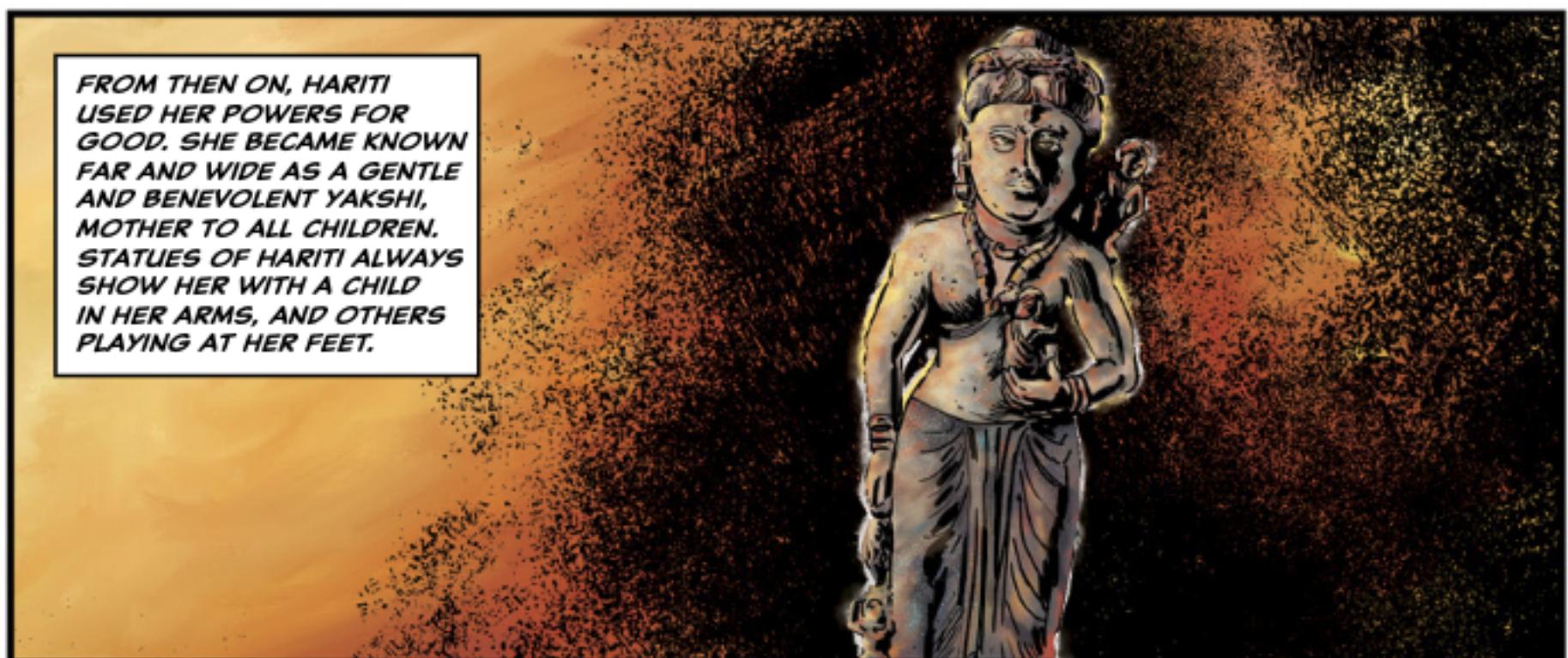
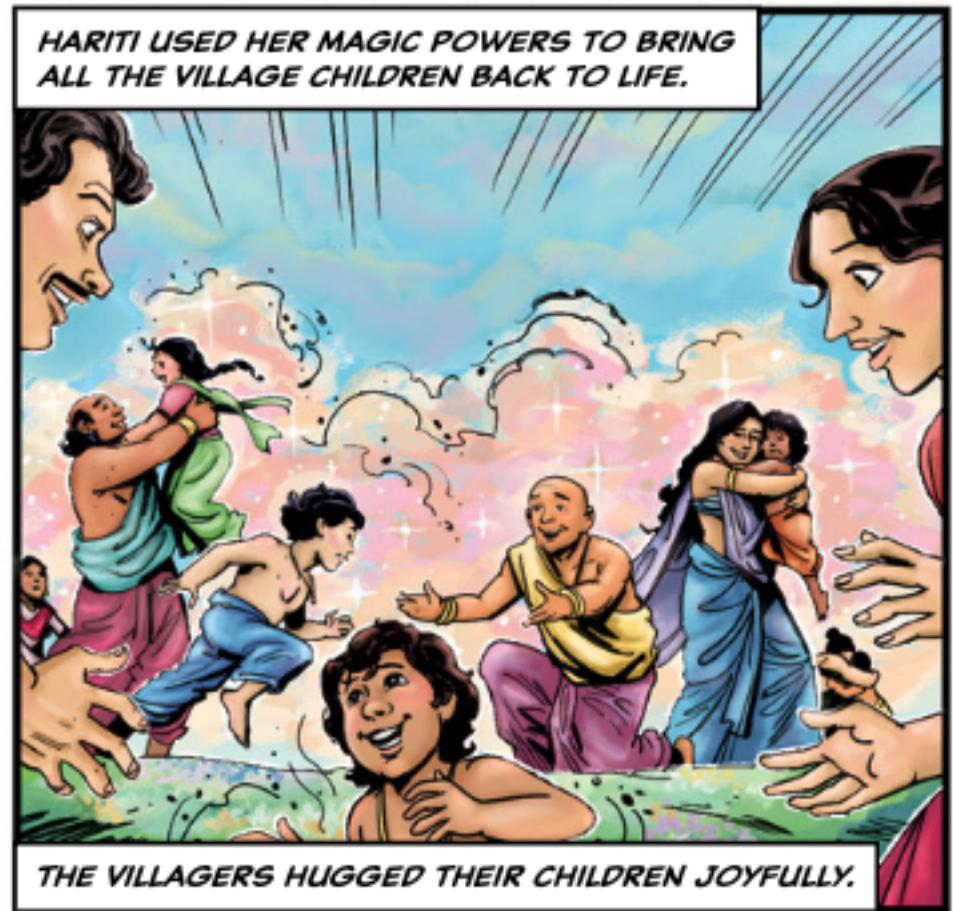
WHO  
ARE YOU?  
WHERE IS MY  
SON?

THE BUDDHA RAISED HIS HAND —

WHY DO  
YOU WEEP,  
HARITI? YOU  
HAVE OTHER  
CHILDREN.

HE IS MY  
YOUNGEST...  
JUST A BABY!  
I CANNOT LIVE  
WITHOUT  
HIM!

BUT THERE  
ARE MANY PARENTS  
LIVING WITHOUT THEIR  
CHILDREN BECAUSE  
OF YOU. DO YOU NOW  
UNDERSTAND THEIR  
PAIN?



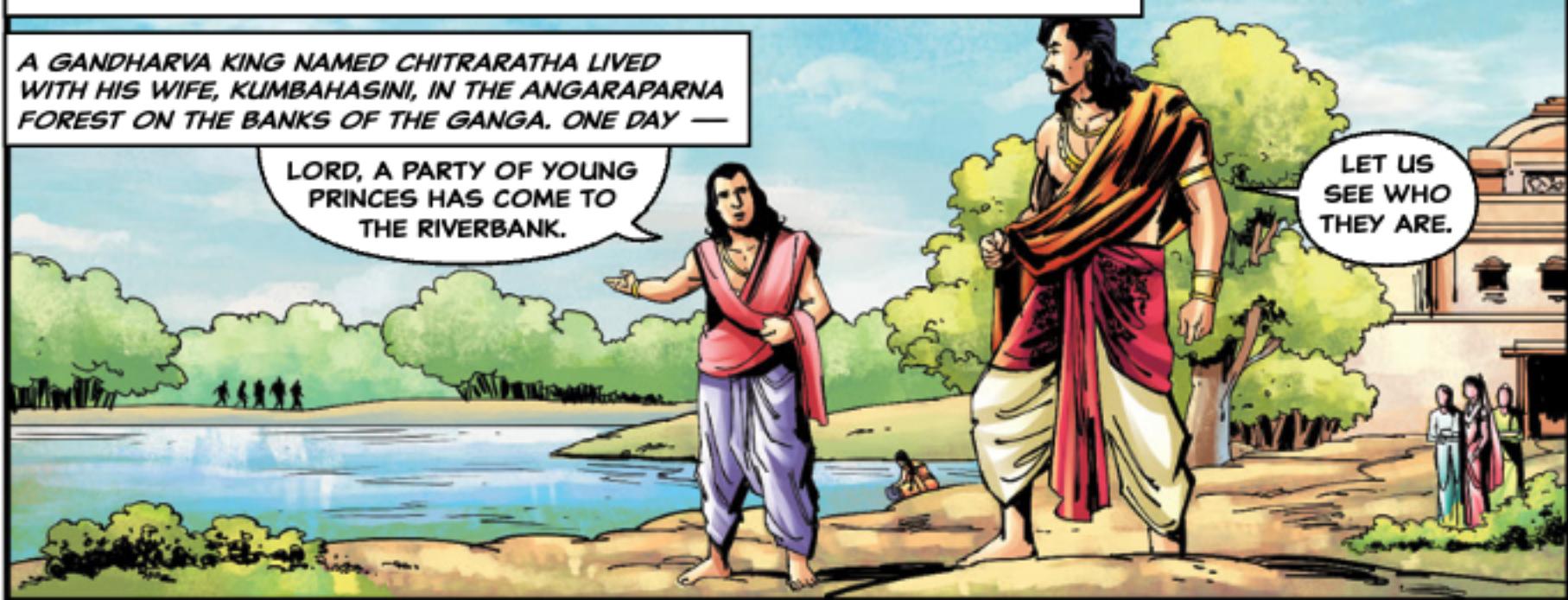
# CHITRARATHA

GANDHARVAS ARE CELESTIAL MUSICIANS POSSESSED OF BEAUTY, TALENT AND MAGICAL POWERS. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THEY LIVE IN KINGDOMS IN THE HIMALAYAS.

A GANDHARVA KING NAMED CHITRARATHA LIVED WITH HIS WIFE, KUMBHASINI, IN THE ANGARAPARNA FOREST ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA. ONE DAY —

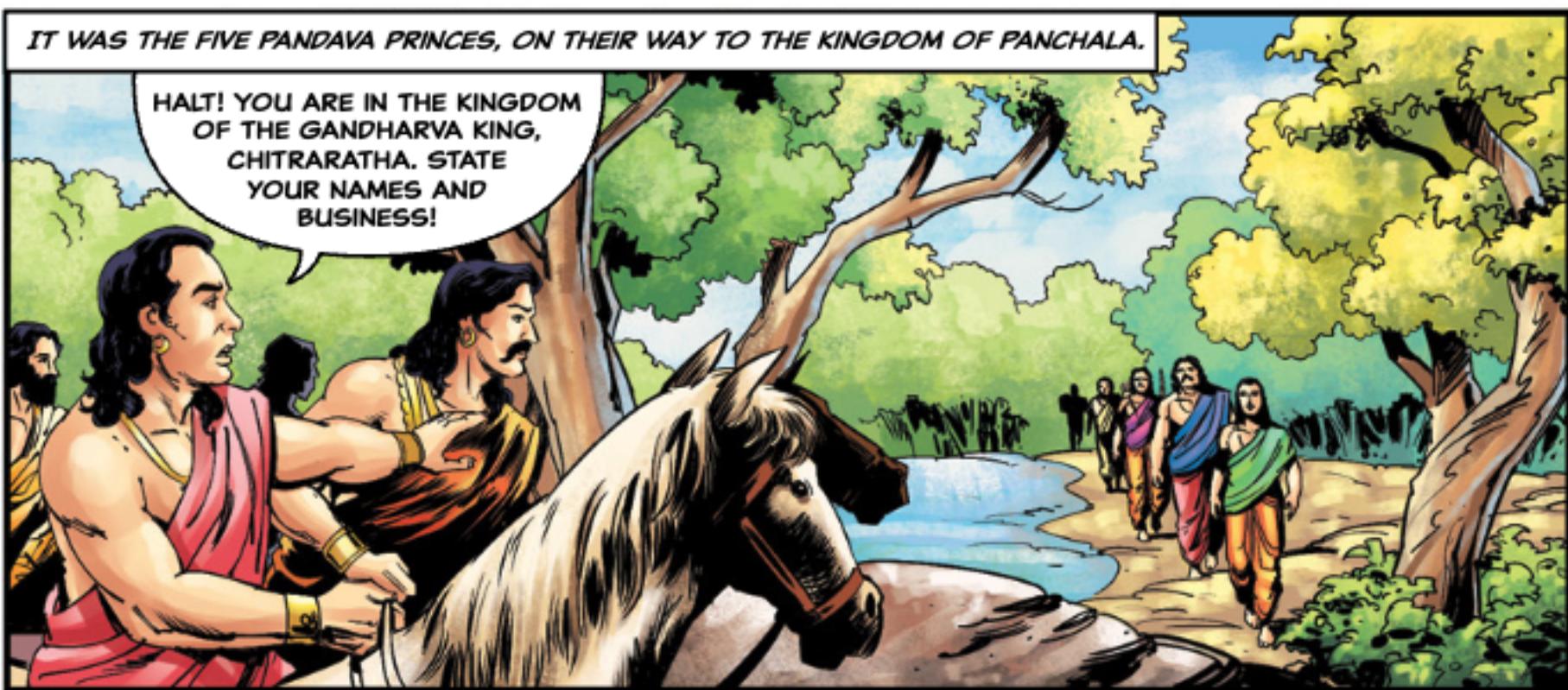
LORD, A PARTY OF YOUNG PRINCES HAS COME TO THE RIVERBANK.

LET US SEE WHO THEY ARE.



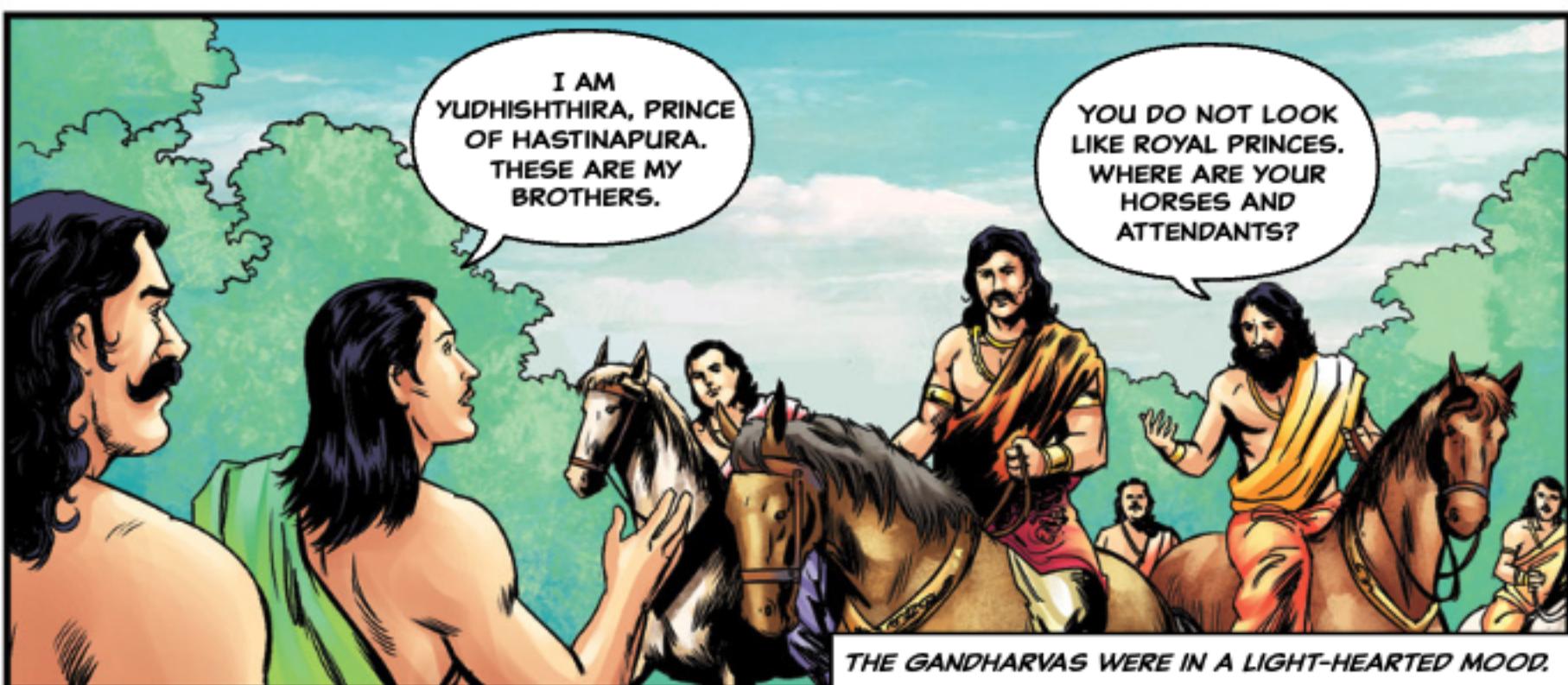
IT WAS THE FIVE PANDAVA PRINCES, ON THEIR WAY TO THE KINGDOM OF PANCHALA.

HALT! YOU ARE IN THE KINGDOM OF THE GANDHARVA KING, CHITRARATHA. STATE YOUR NAMES AND BUSINESS!

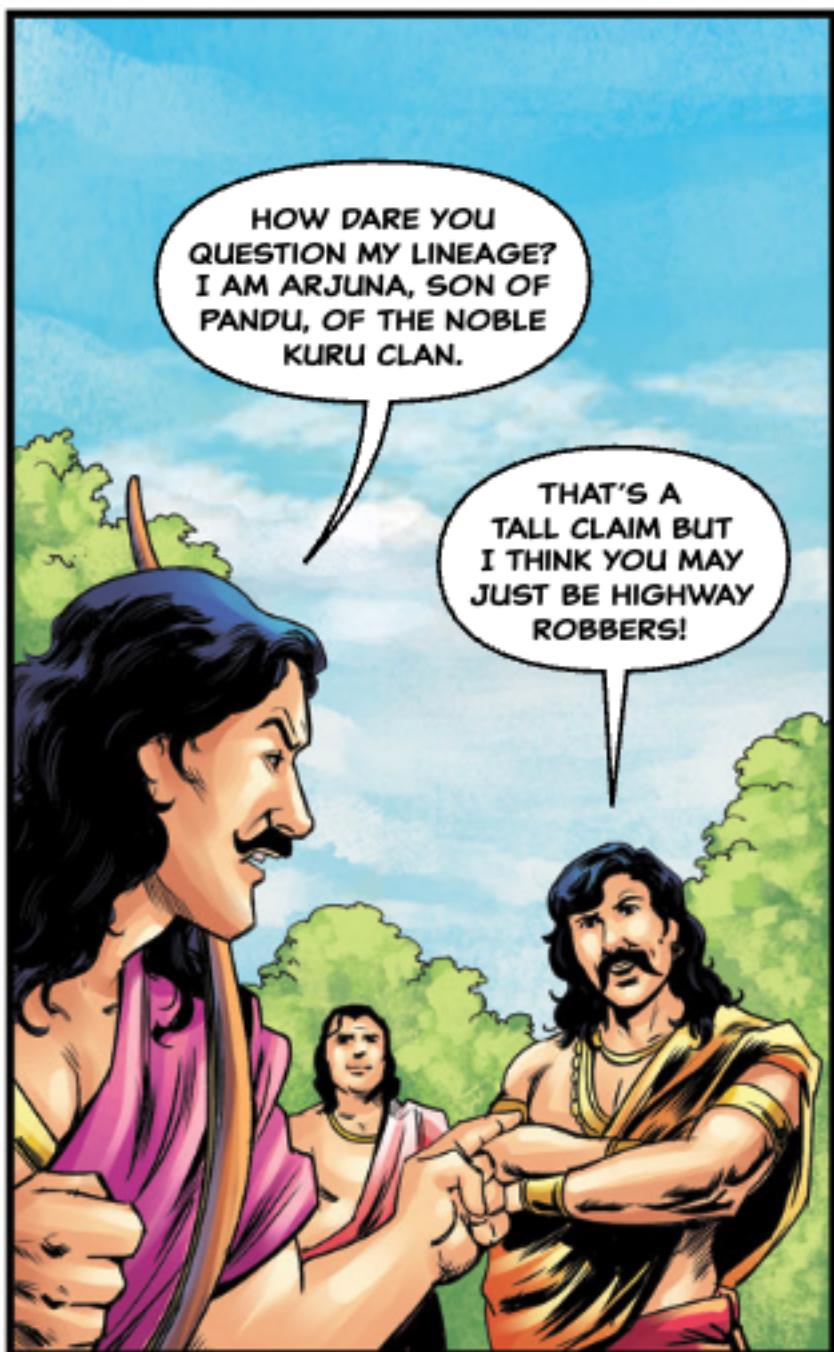
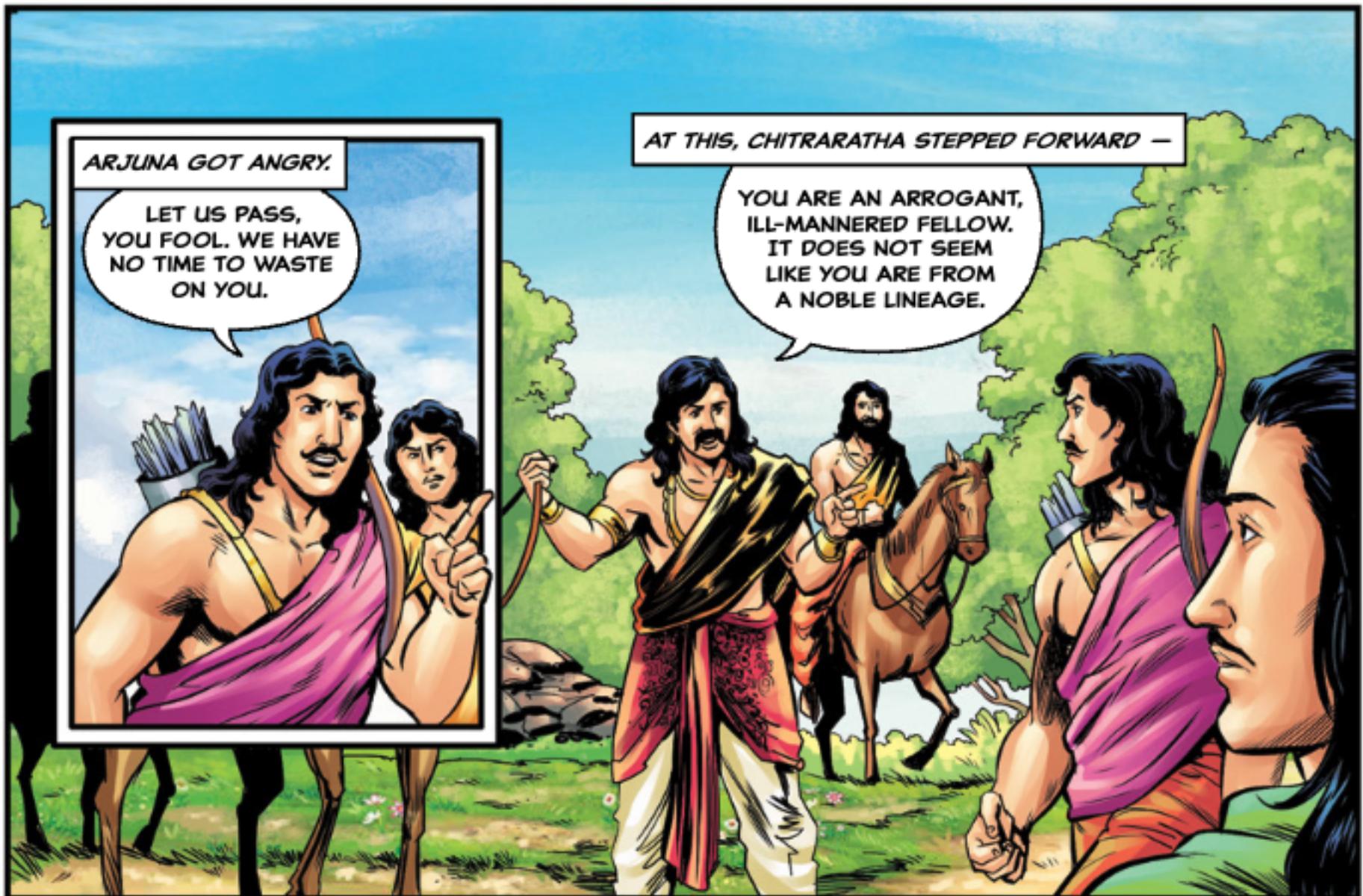


I AM YUDHISHTHIRA, PRINCE OF HASTINAPURA. THESE ARE MY BROTHERS.

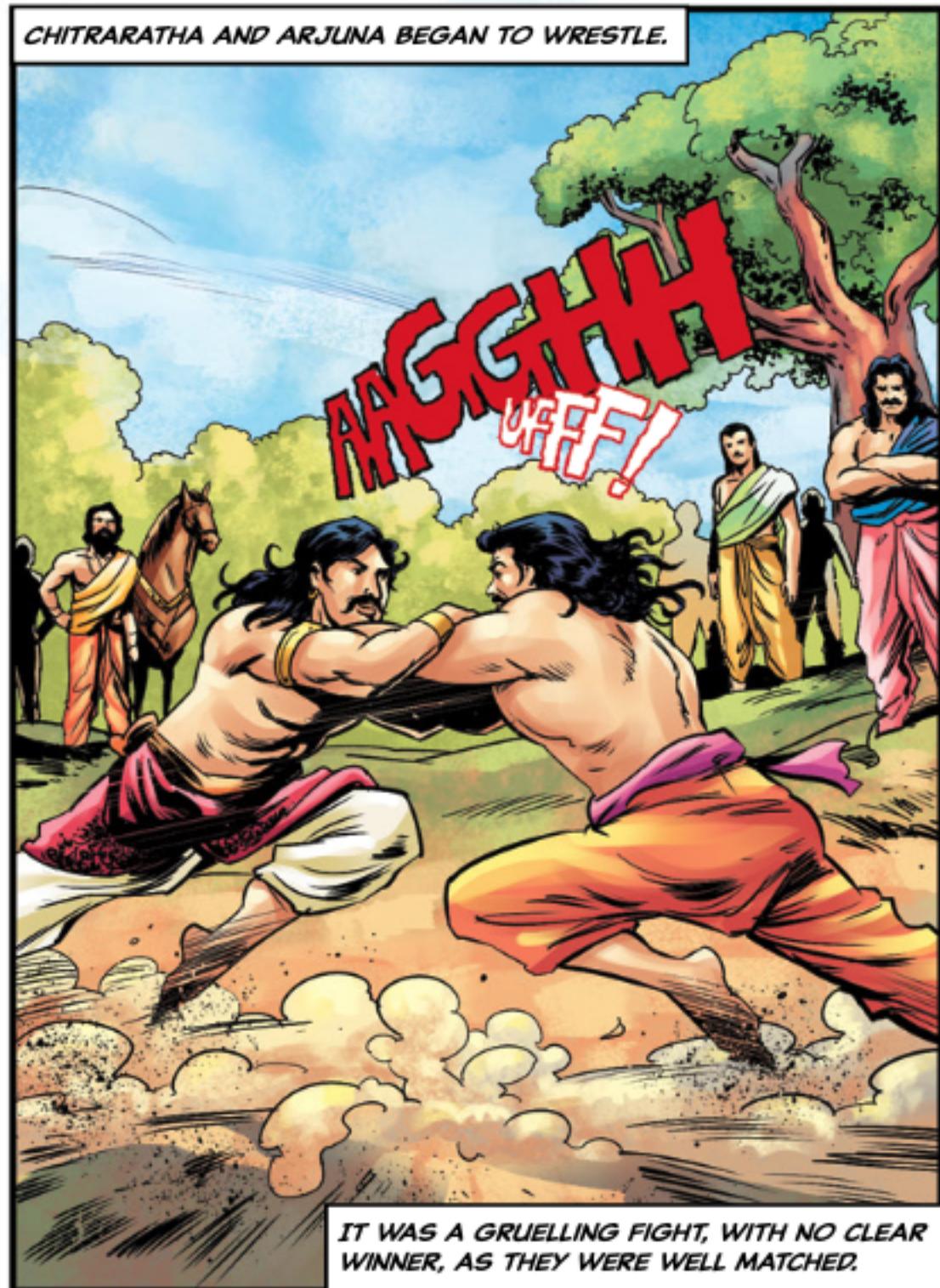
YOU DO NOT LOOK LIKE ROYAL PRINCES. WHERE ARE YOUR HORSES AND ATTENDANTS?

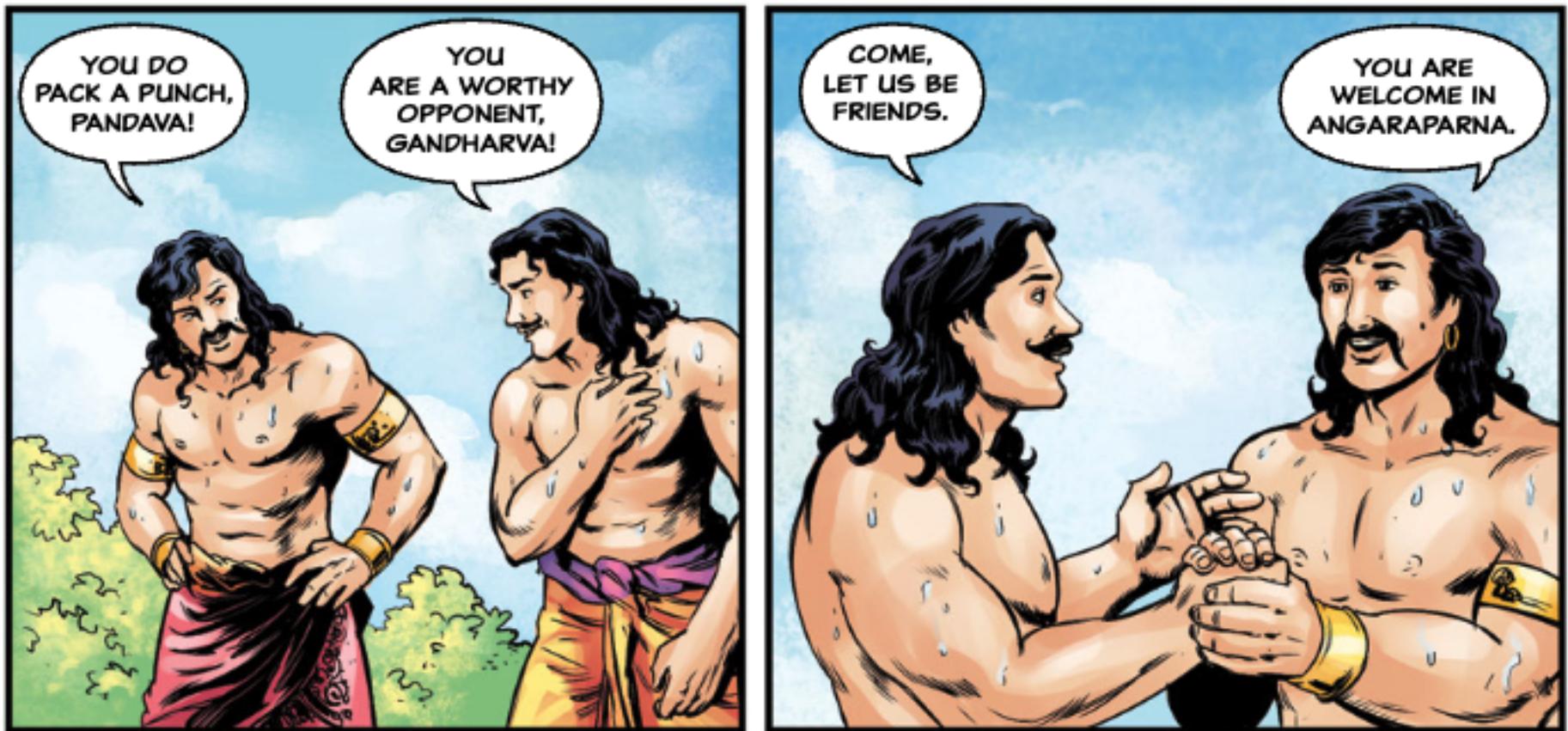


THE GANDHARVAS WERE IN A LIGHT-HEARTED MOOD.

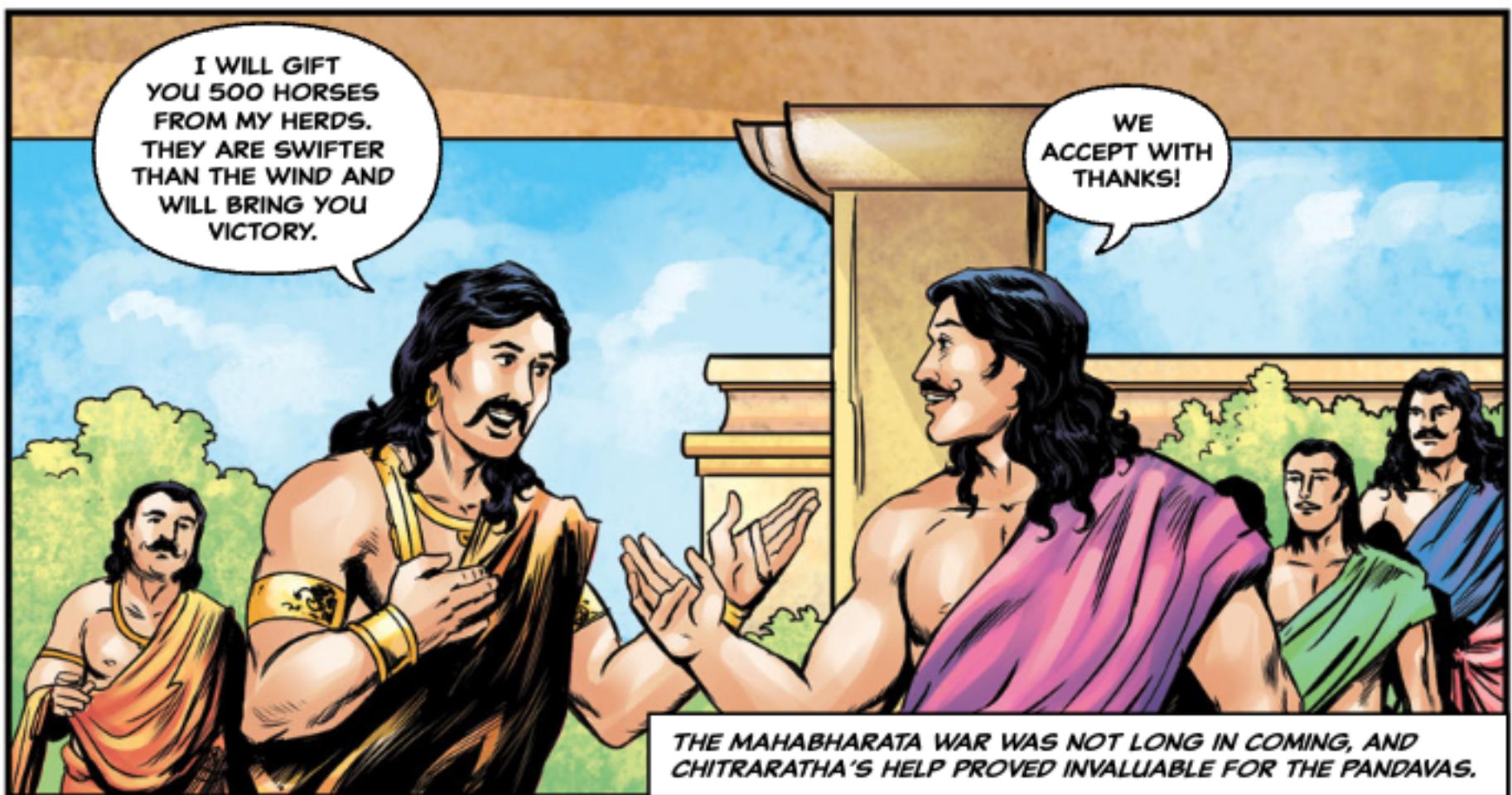
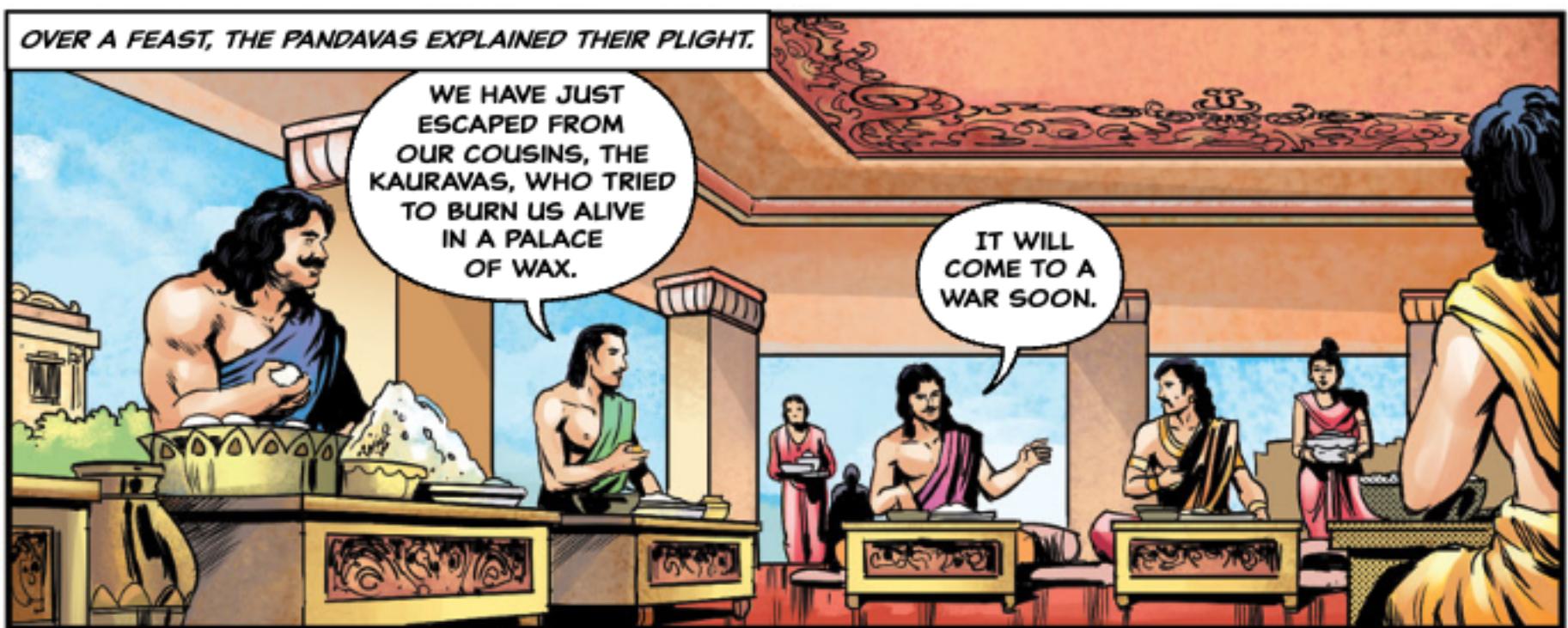


## CHITRARATHA





OVER A FEAST, THE PANDAVAS EXPLAINED THEIR PLIGHT.



# TUMBURU

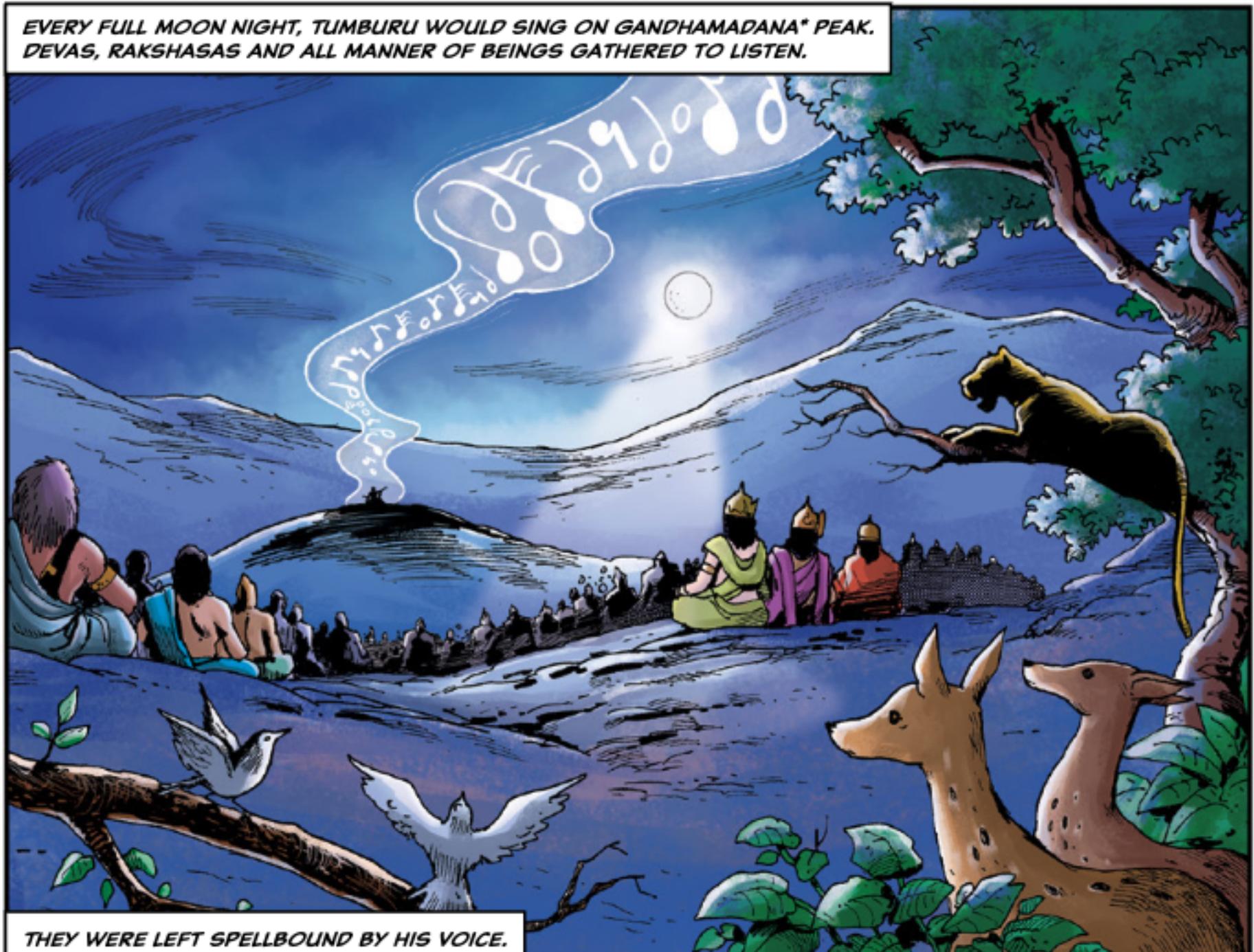
THERE WERE MANY TALENTED GANDHARVAS IN ALAKAPURI, BUT NONE MORE SO THAN TUMBURU. HE basked in his own glory till one day his arrogance became his downfall.

ONE MORNING IN ALAKAPURI, THE CITADEL OF KUBERA —

TUMBURU,  
YOU ENTHRALLED  
THE AUDIENCE IN THE  
SABHA LAST NIGHT.  
PLEASE ACCEPT ME  
AS YOUR PUPIL.



EVERY FULL MOON NIGHT, TUMBURU WOULD SING ON GANDHAMADANA\* PEAK. DEVAS, RAKSHASAS AND ALL MANNER OF BEINGS GATHERED TO LISTEN.



THEY WERE LEFT SPELLBOUND BY HIS VOICE.

\*A MOUNTAIN KNOWN FOR THE BEAUTY OF ITS GROVES AND SCENTED FLOWERS

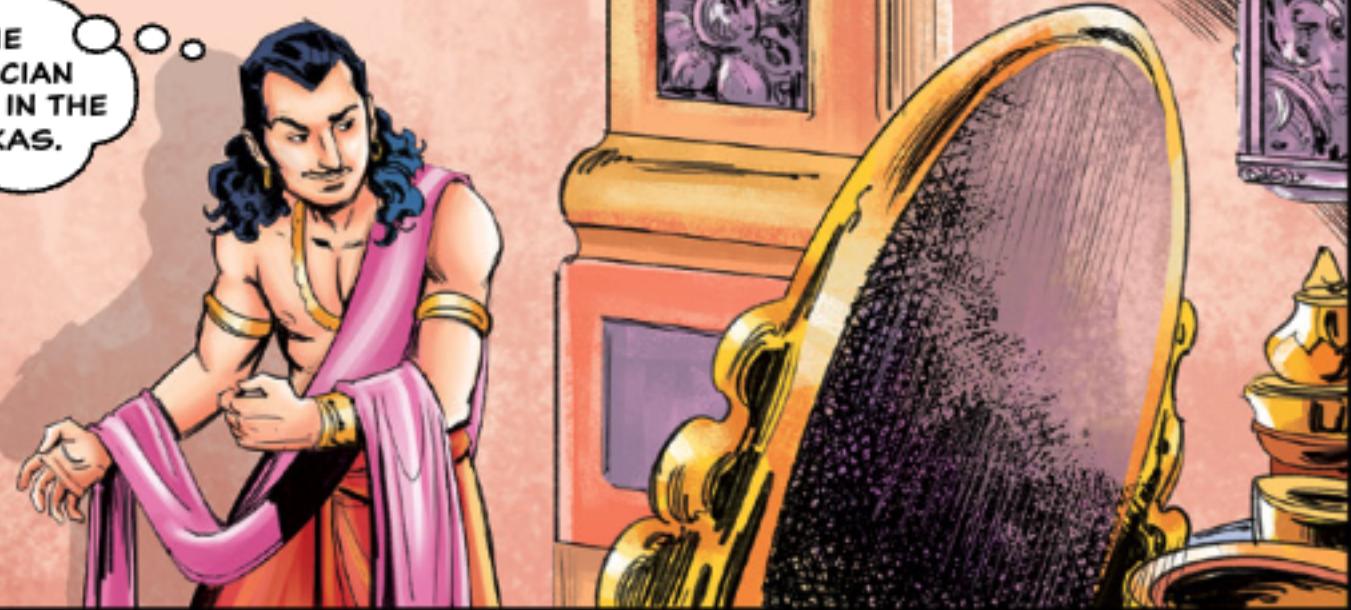
EVEN A RENOWNED MUSICIAN LIKE NARADA HAD TO ADMIT DEFEAT IN FRONT OF TUMBURU.



ALL THE APSARAS WANTED TO LEARN DANCING FROM HIM. RAMBHA WAS ONE OF THE LOVELIEST APSARAS AT THE COURT AND TUMBURU'S FAVOURITE PUPIL.



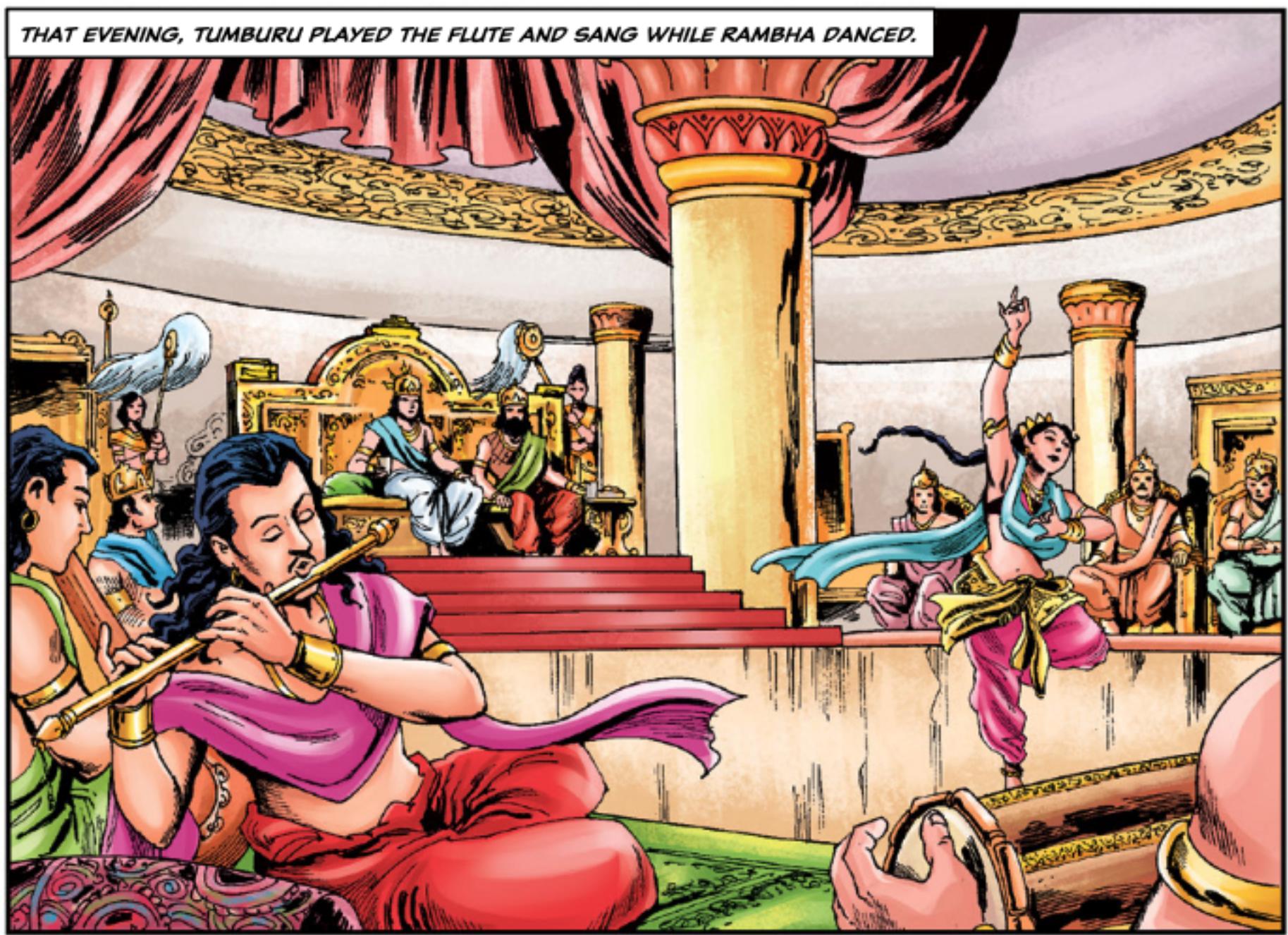
I AM THE BEST MUSICIAN AND DANCER IN THE THREE LOKAS.



ONE DAY, KING PURURAVAS STOPPED AT THE COURT OF INDRA ON HIS RETURN FROM A VICTORIOUS BATTLE AGAINST THE RAKSHASA, MAYADHARA.



THAT EVENING, TUMBURU PLAYED THE FLUTE AND SANG WHILE RAMBHA DANCED.



SUDDENLY —

OH  
LOOK, RAMBHA  
HAS MISSED A  
STEP.

AFTER A FEW MINUTES —

HER PIROUETTES  
LACK GRACE TODAY.  
DON'T YOU AGREE,  
LORD INDRA?



PURURAVAS' COMMENTS ANNOYED TUMBURU.

O PURURAVAS,  
HOW DARE YOU  
CRITICISE MY BEST  
PUPIL? WHAT DO YOU  
KNOW OF DANCE  
ANYWAY?

I KNOW  
ENOUGH, TUMBURU.  
I HAVE LEARNT MORE  
FROM MY WIFE,  
URVASHI, THAN YOU  
COULD TEACH IN A  
LIFETIME.

AS PURURAVAS WAS MARRIED TO THE APSARA, URVASHI, HE  
CONSIDERED HIMSELF VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE ARTS.

TUMBURU COULD NOT CONTROL HIS ANGER.

YOU FOOLISH  
KING! I CURSE YOU TO  
BE SEPARATED FROM  
YOUR WIFE.

THE ENTIRE ASSEMBLY WAS SHOCKED.

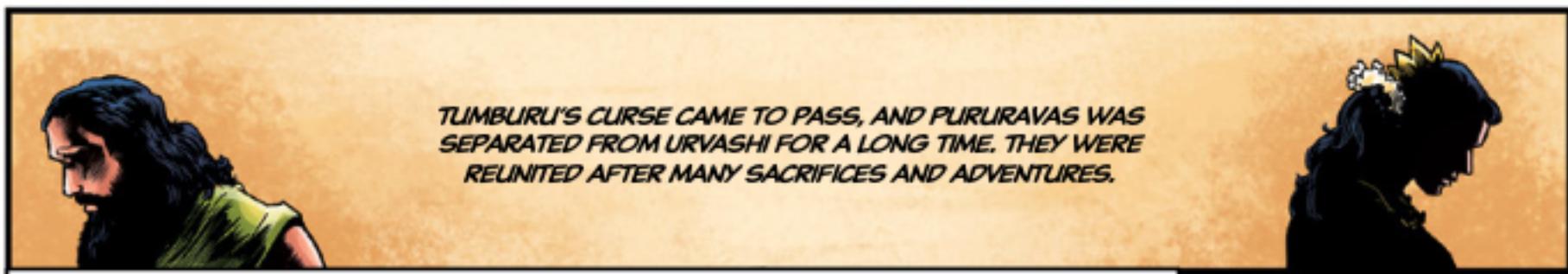
WHAT HAS  
HE DONE?

OH NO!

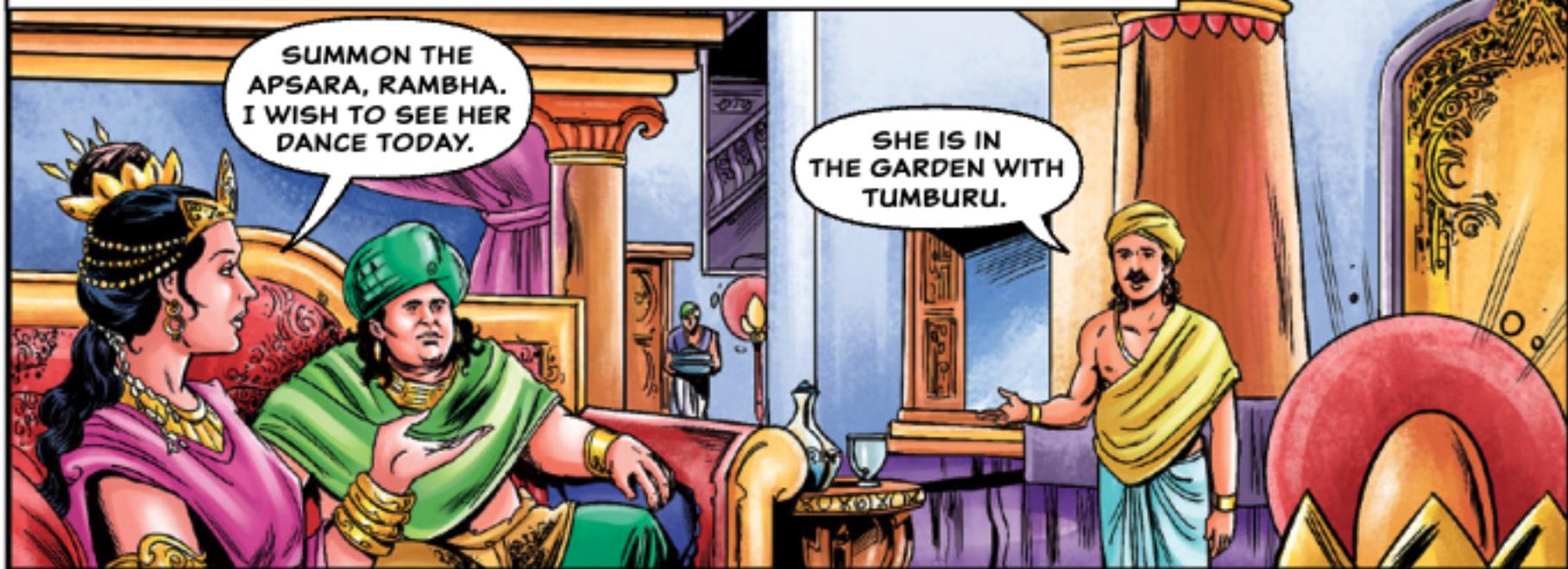
TUMBURU,  
DO NOT CURSE IN  
ANGER, OR YOU TOO  
WILL BE CURSED IN  
TURN ONE DAY.

TUMBURU REALISED HIS MISTAKE BUT HE COULD NOT TAKE BACK THE CURSE. HE COULD ONLY AMEND IT.

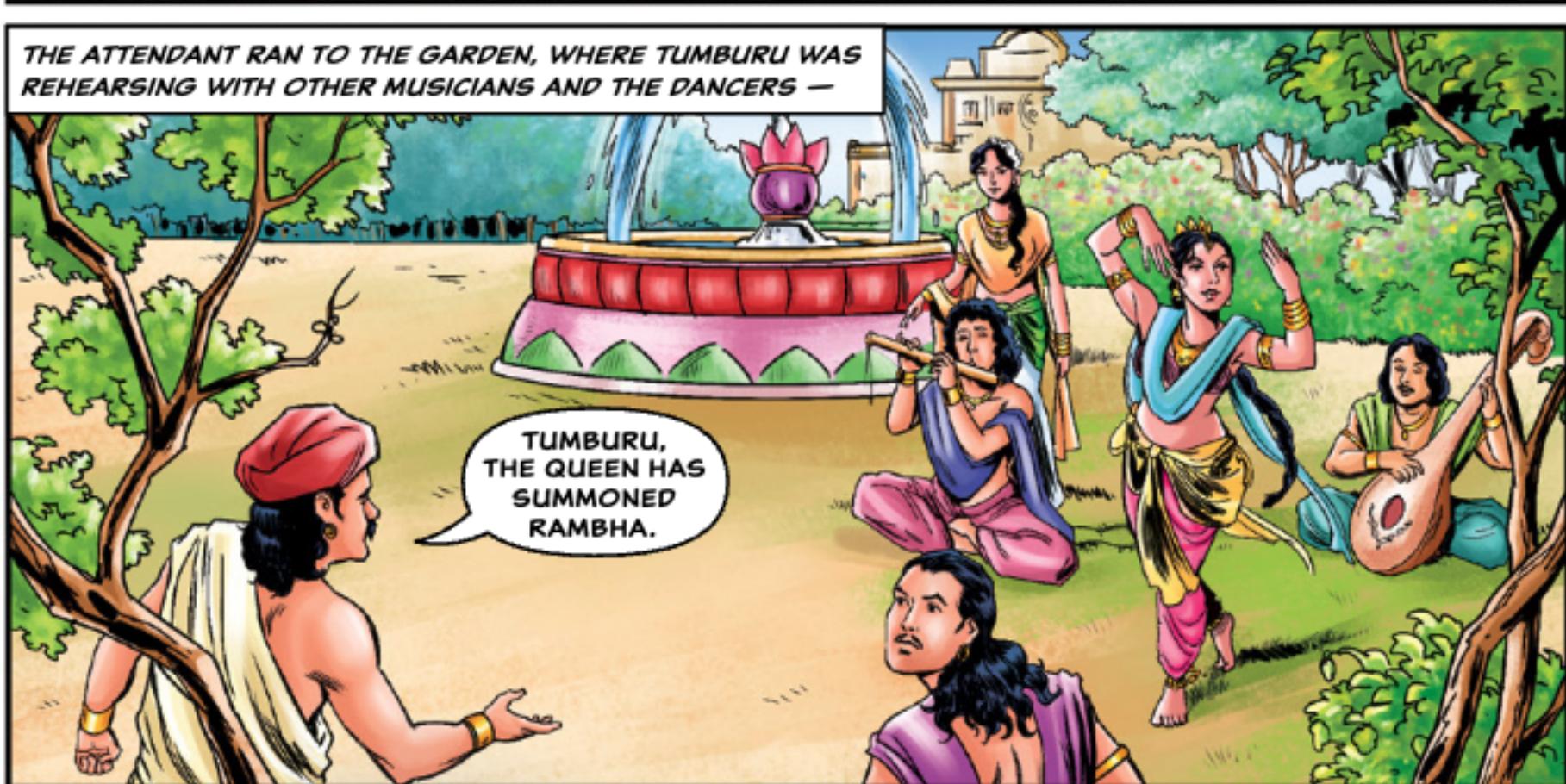
THE CURSE  
WILL BE LIFTED IF  
YOU DO PENANCE TO  
PLEASE VISHNU.



HOWEVER, ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES. ONE DAY, AT THE COURT OF KUBERA —



THE ATTENDANT RAN TO THE GARDEN, WHERE TUMBURU WAS REHEARSING WITH OTHER MUSICIANS AND THE DANCERS —



SHE WILL  
BE THERE IN A  
WHILE.



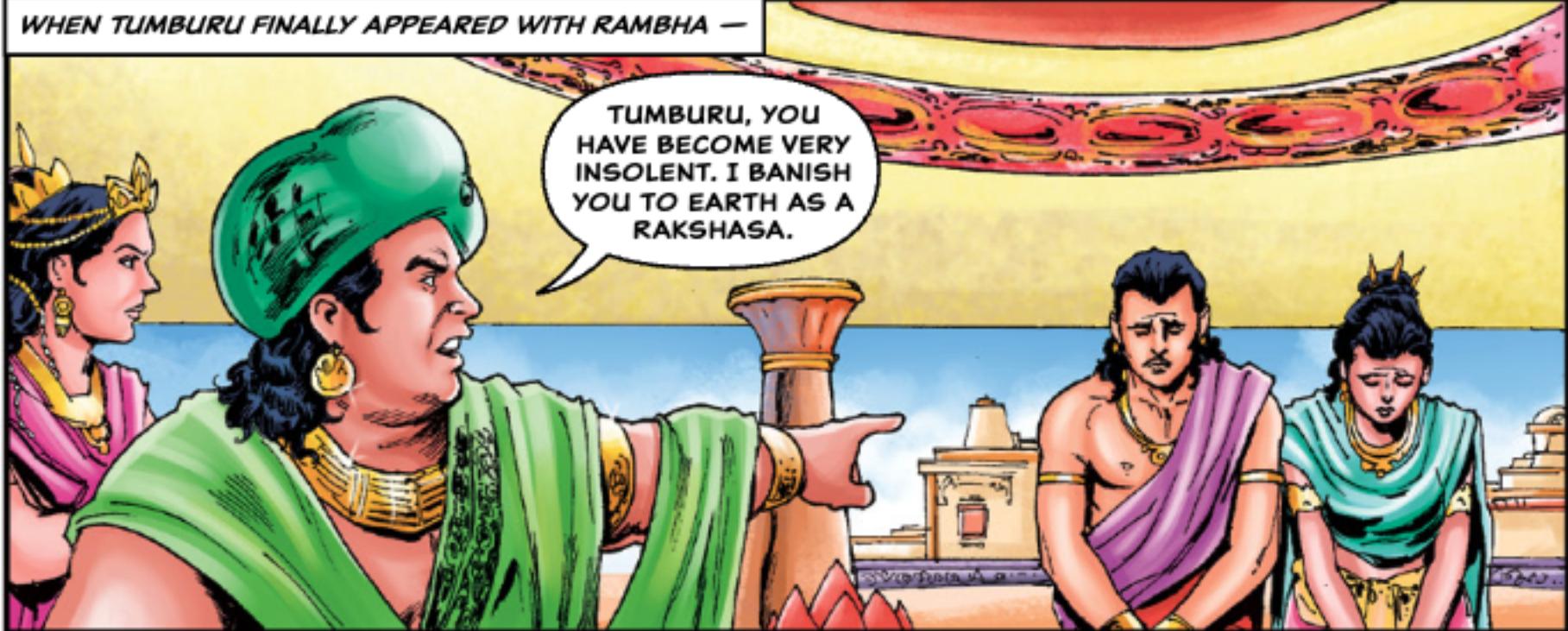
THE MESSENGER RETURNED TO THE QUEEN.



HEARING THIS, KUBERA BECAME ANGRY.



WHEN TUMBURU FINALLY APPEARED WITH RAMBHA —



TUMBURU WAS DISMAYED.

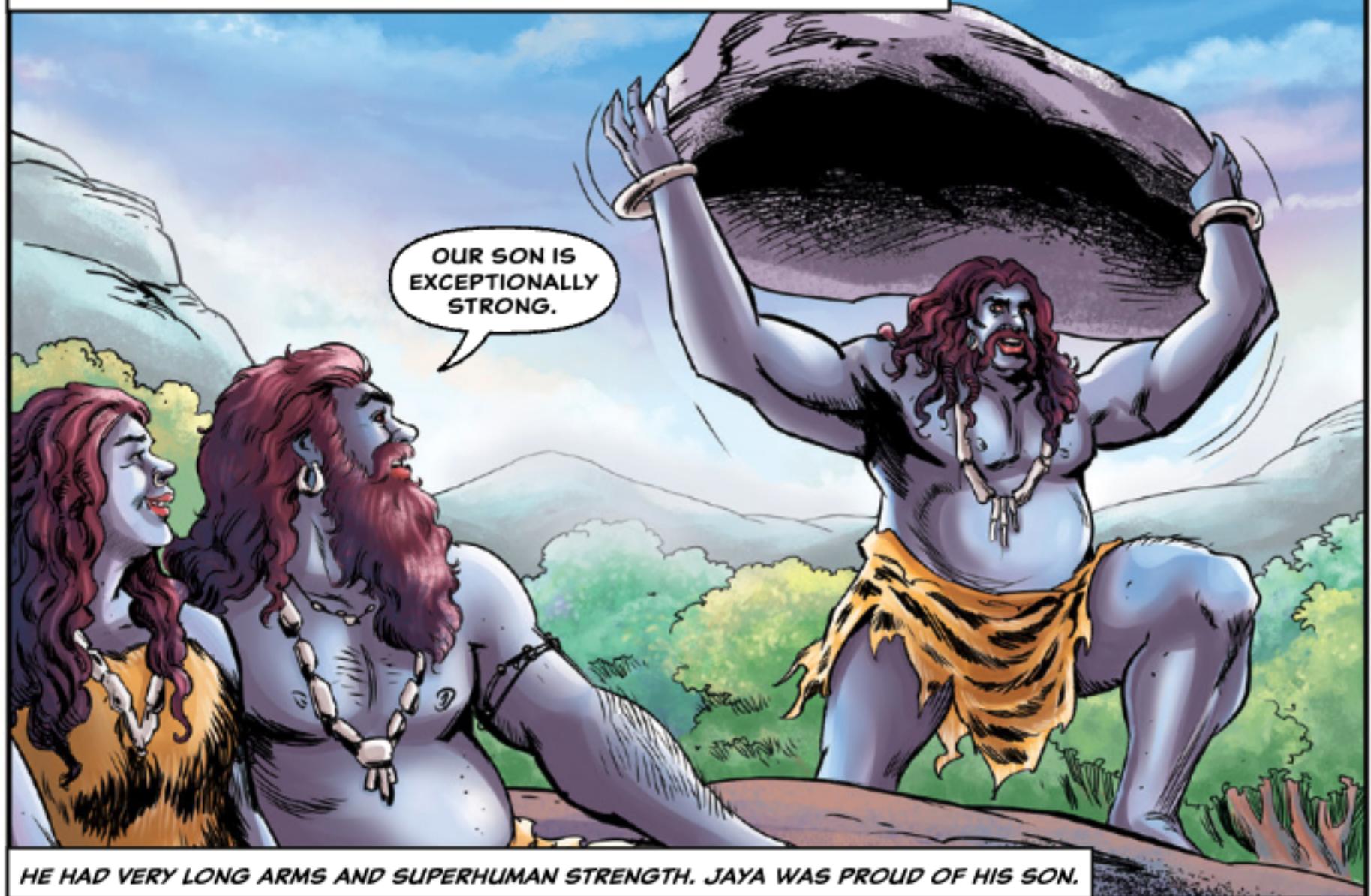


KUBERA HAD A SOFT HEART.



## TUMBURU

AND SO, IT CAME ABOUT THAT TUMBURU WAS BORN ON EARTH AS VIRADHA, THE SON OF THE RAKSHASA, JAYA, WHO LIVED IN THE DANDAKA FOREST.

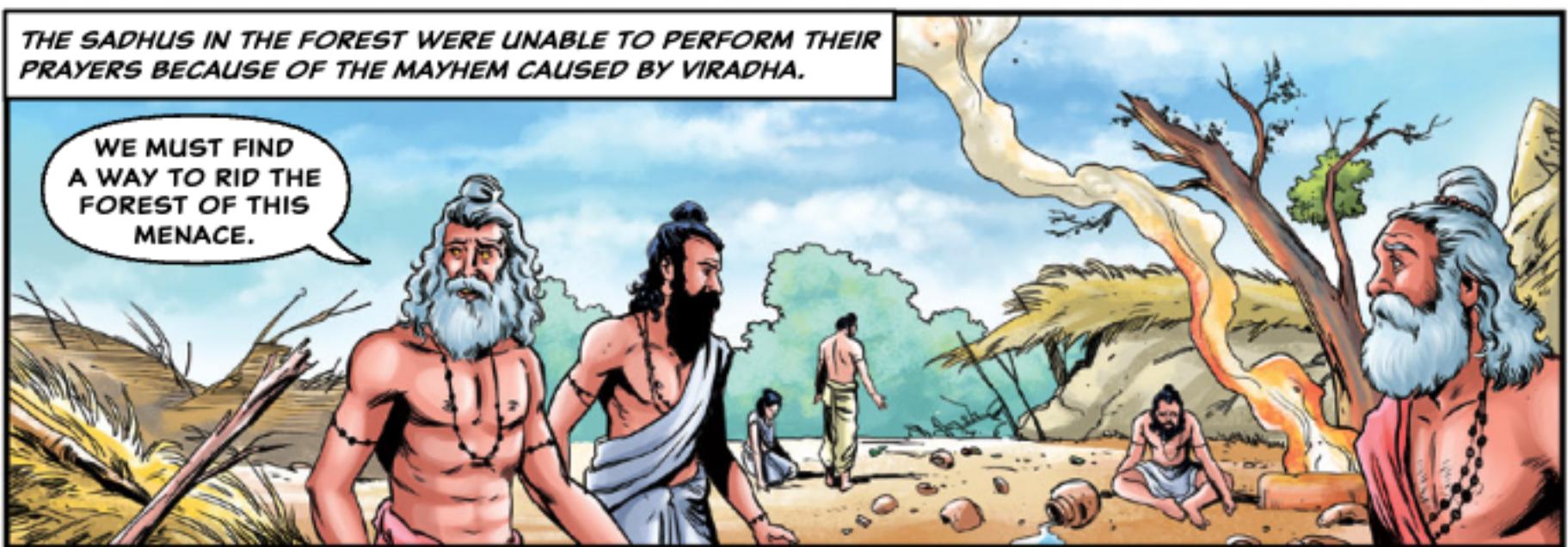


VIRADHA AROUSED FEAR WHEREVER HE WENT.



THE SADHUS IN THE FOREST WERE UNABLE TO PERFORM THEIR PRAYERS BECAUSE OF THE MAYHEM CAUSED BY VIRADHA.

WE MUST FIND A WAY TO RID THE FOREST OF THIS MENACE.



AS IT HAPPENED, RAMA AND LAKSHMANA, THE PRINCES OF AYODHYA, ACCCOMPANIED BY RAMA'S WIFE, SITA, WERE WANDERING IN EXILE THROUGH THE DANDAKA FOREST. THEY LEARNED OF THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SADHUS.

YOU MUST HELP US, RAMA.

WE SHALL DO OUR BEST, GURUJI.



THE VERY NEXT DAY —

**ROAARRR!**

RAMA, WHAT IS THAT SOUND?

I THINK WE HAVE FOUND VIRADHA.



THE GROUND BEGAN TO TREMBLE.

THUD!

THUD!

THUD!



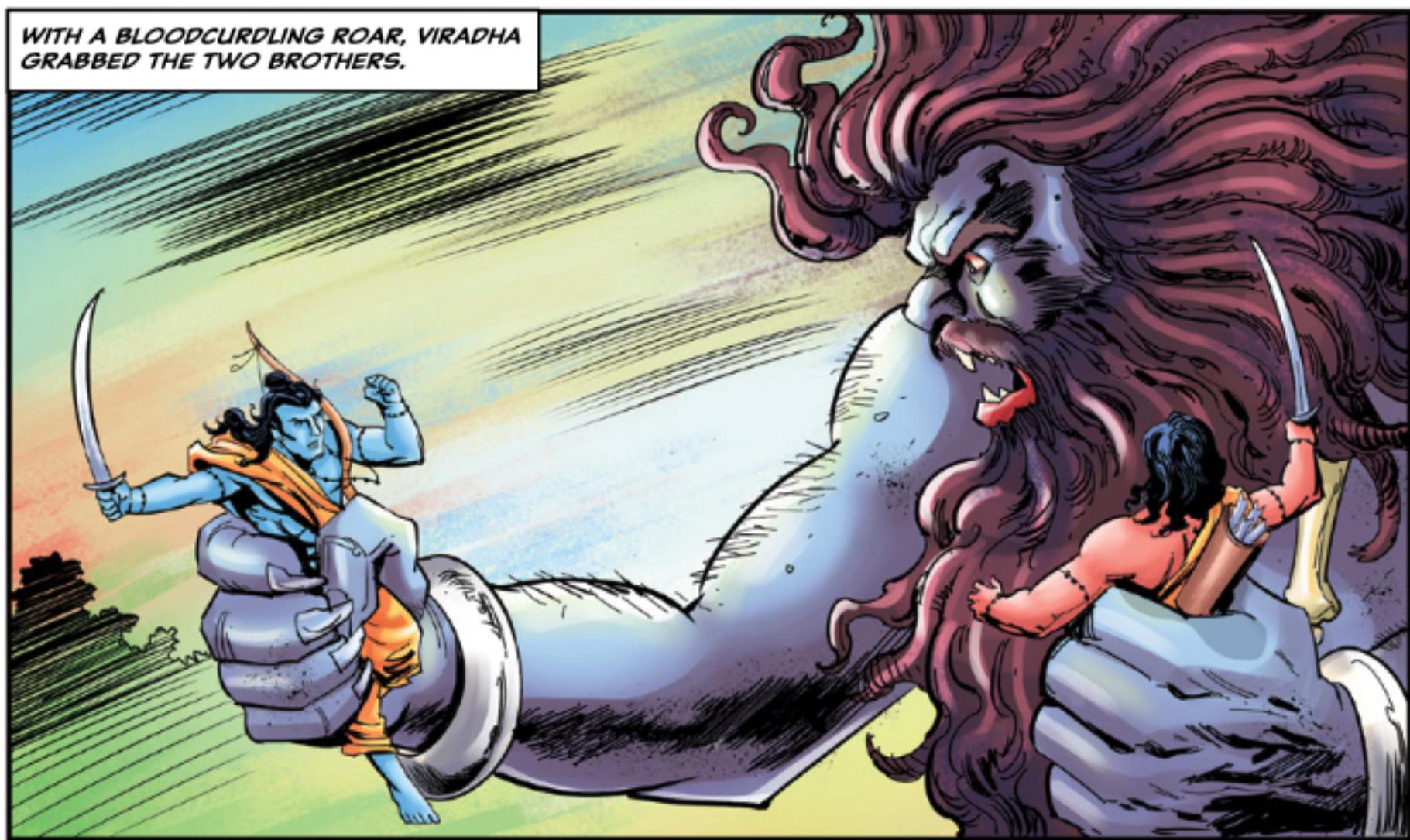
SUDDENLY —

AARRRGHHH

ON GUARD,  
LAKSHMANA! SITA,  
STAY HIDDEN BEHIND  
THE ROCKS.

YES,  
BROTHER!

WITH A BLOODCURDLING ROAR, VIRADHA GRABBED THE TWO BROTHERS.



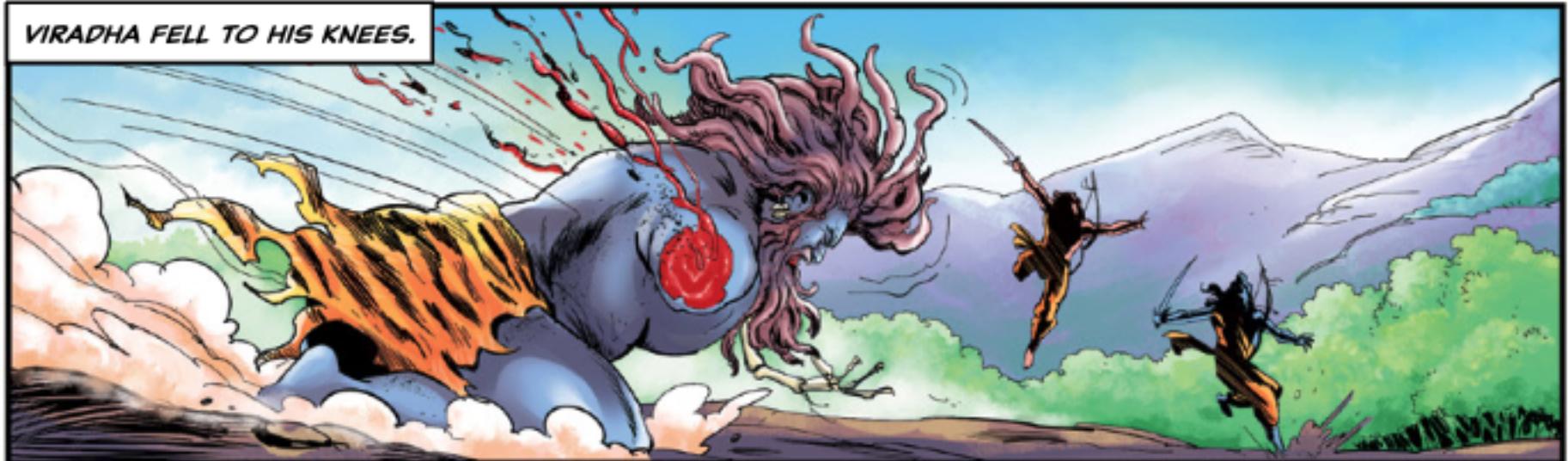
HE PLACED ONE ON EACH SHOULDER AND LEAPT THROUGH THE FOREST WITH GIANT STRIDES.

LET US CUT OFF HIS ARMS, LAKSHMANA!





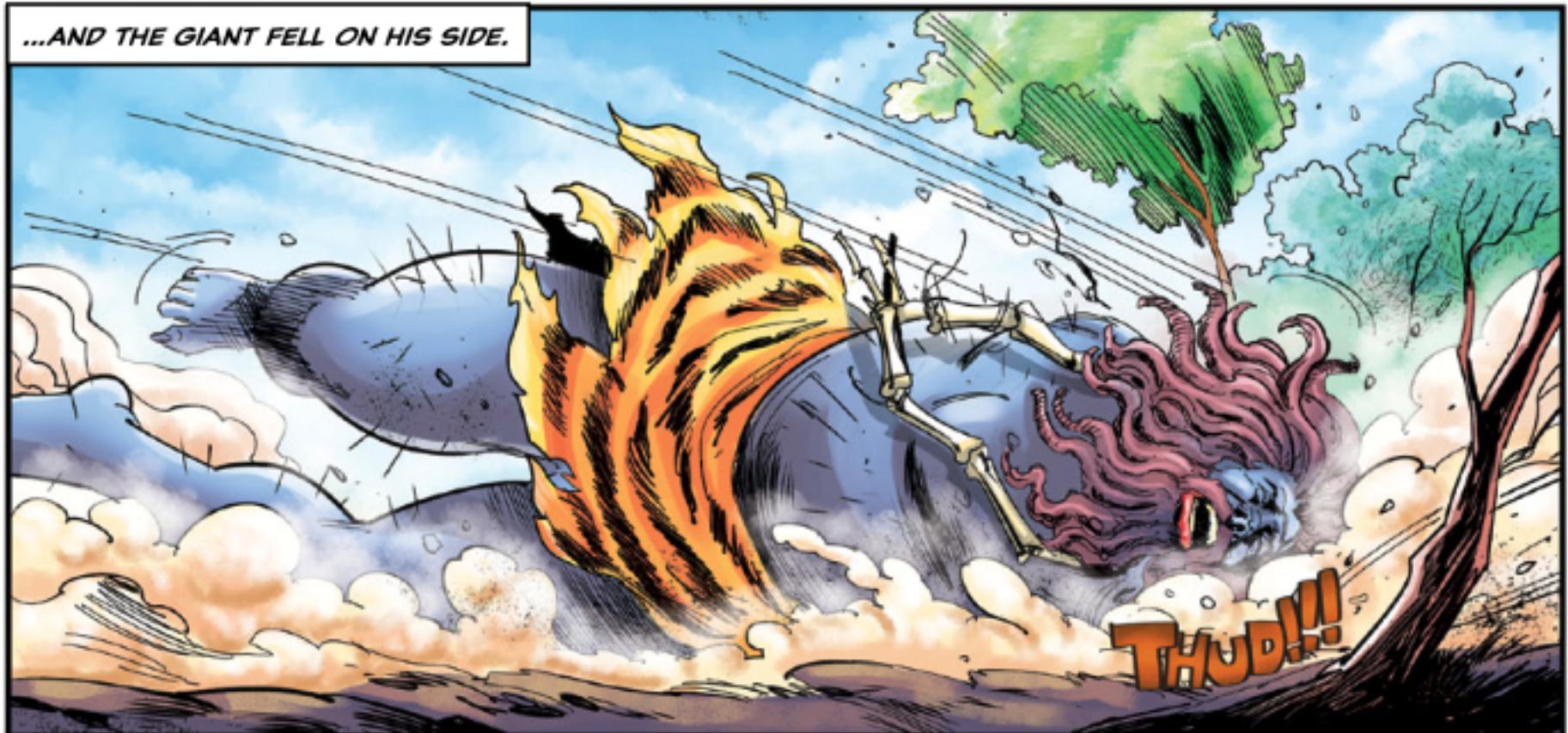
VIRADHA FELL TO HIS KNEES.



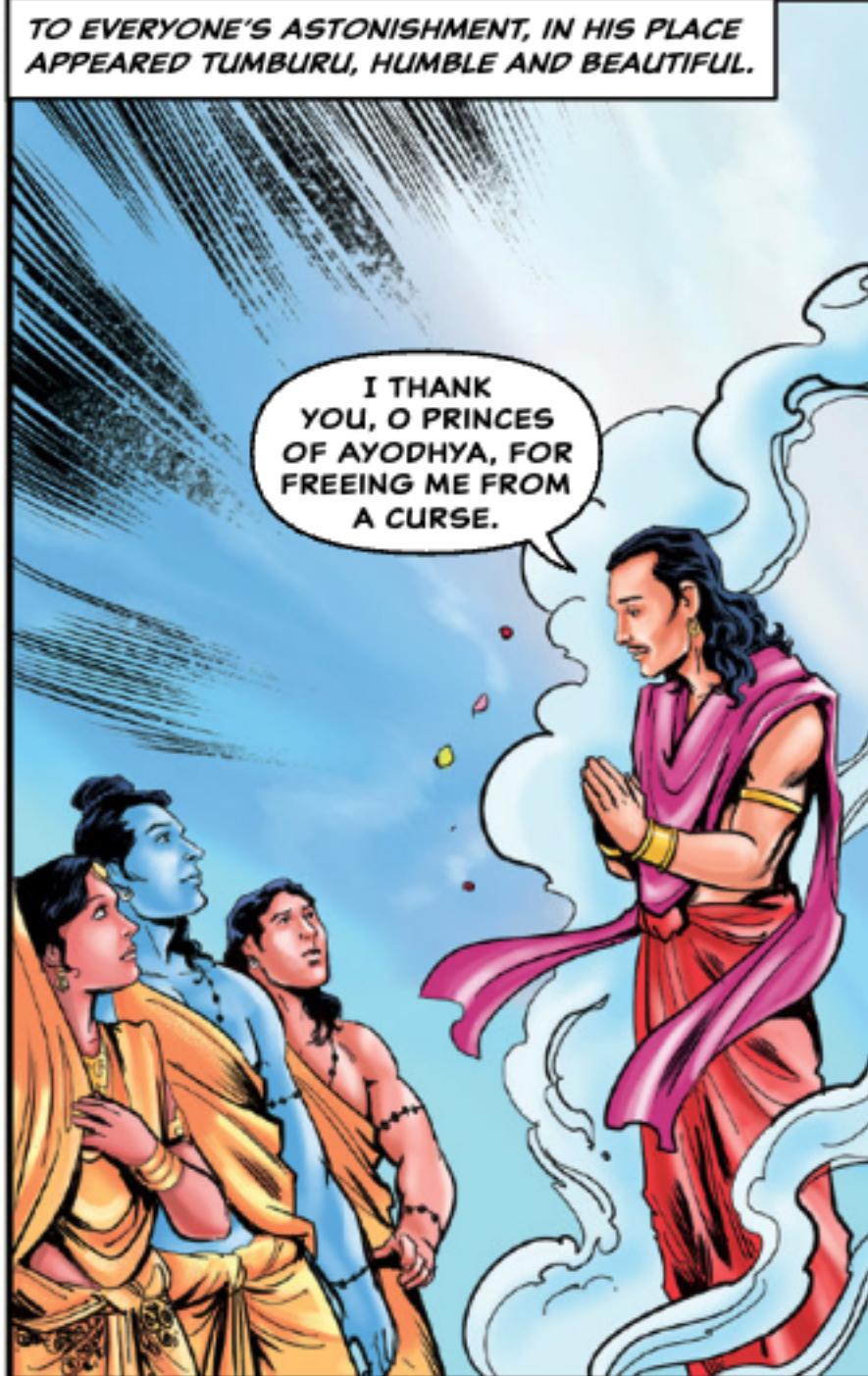
THE BROTHERS LET OFF A VOLLEY OF ARROWS...



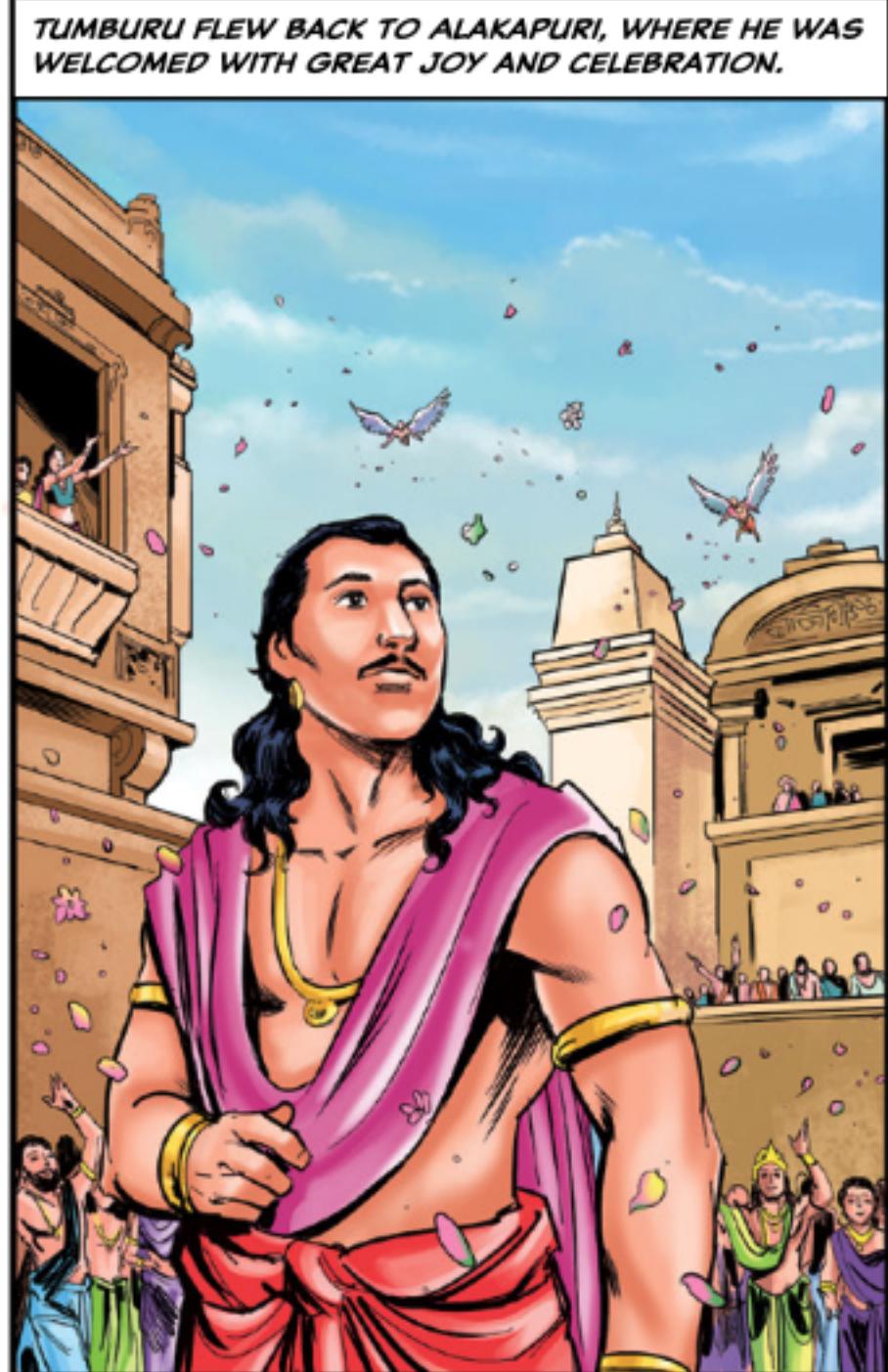
...AND THE GIANT FELL ON HIS SIDE.



TO EVERYONE'S ASTONISHMENT, IN HIS PLACE APPEARED TUMBURU, HUMBLE AND BEAUTIFUL.



TUMBURU FLEW BACK TO ALAKAPURI, WHERE HE WAS WELCOMED WITH GREAT JOY AND CELEBRATION.



TUMBURU,  
WE HAVE MISSED  
YOUR GOLDEN  
VOICE. WILL YOU  
SING FOR US?

YES, OF  
COURSE, YOUR  
MAJESTY!



# MENAKA

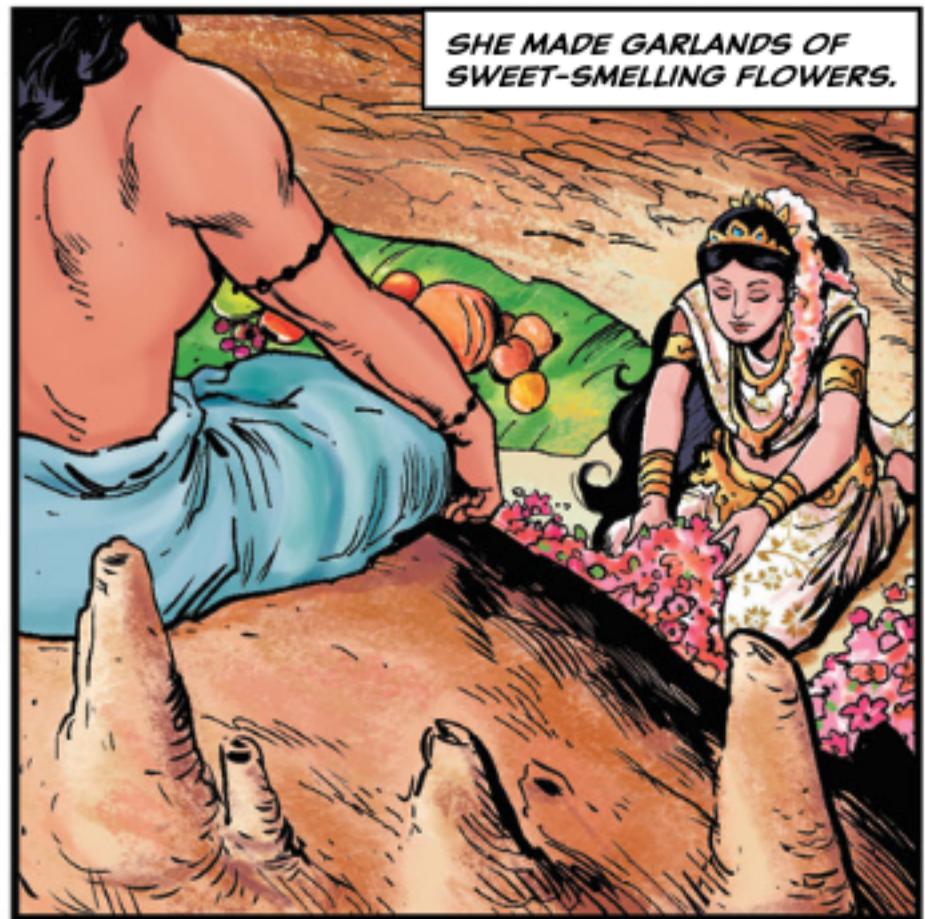
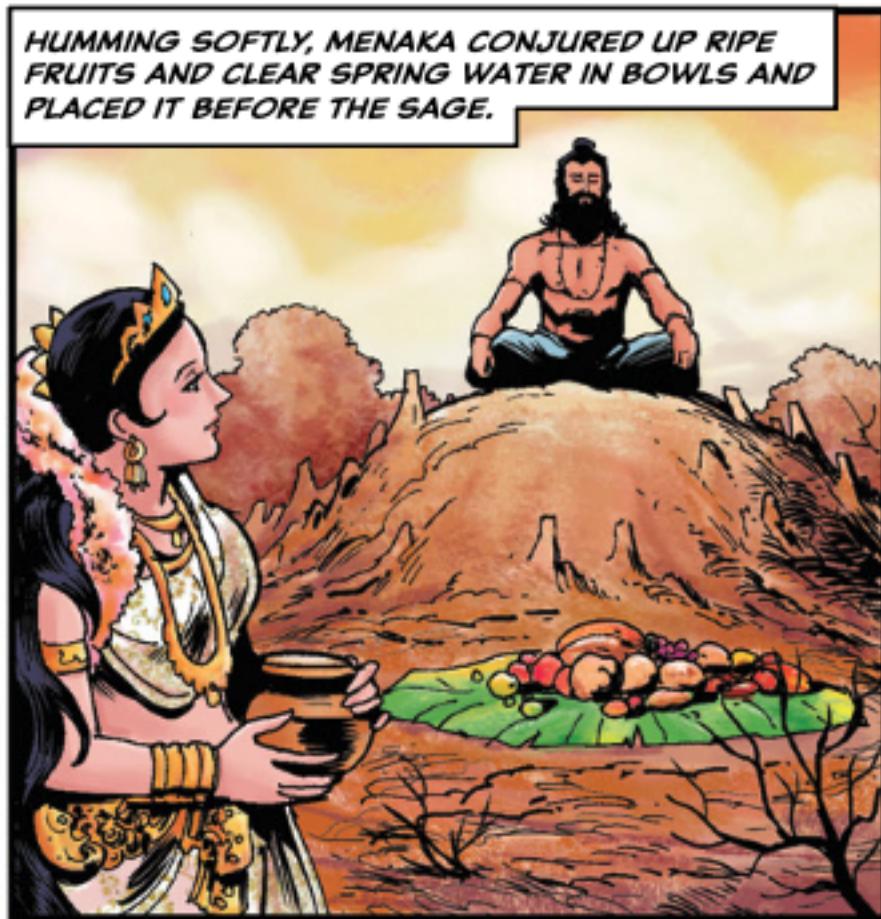
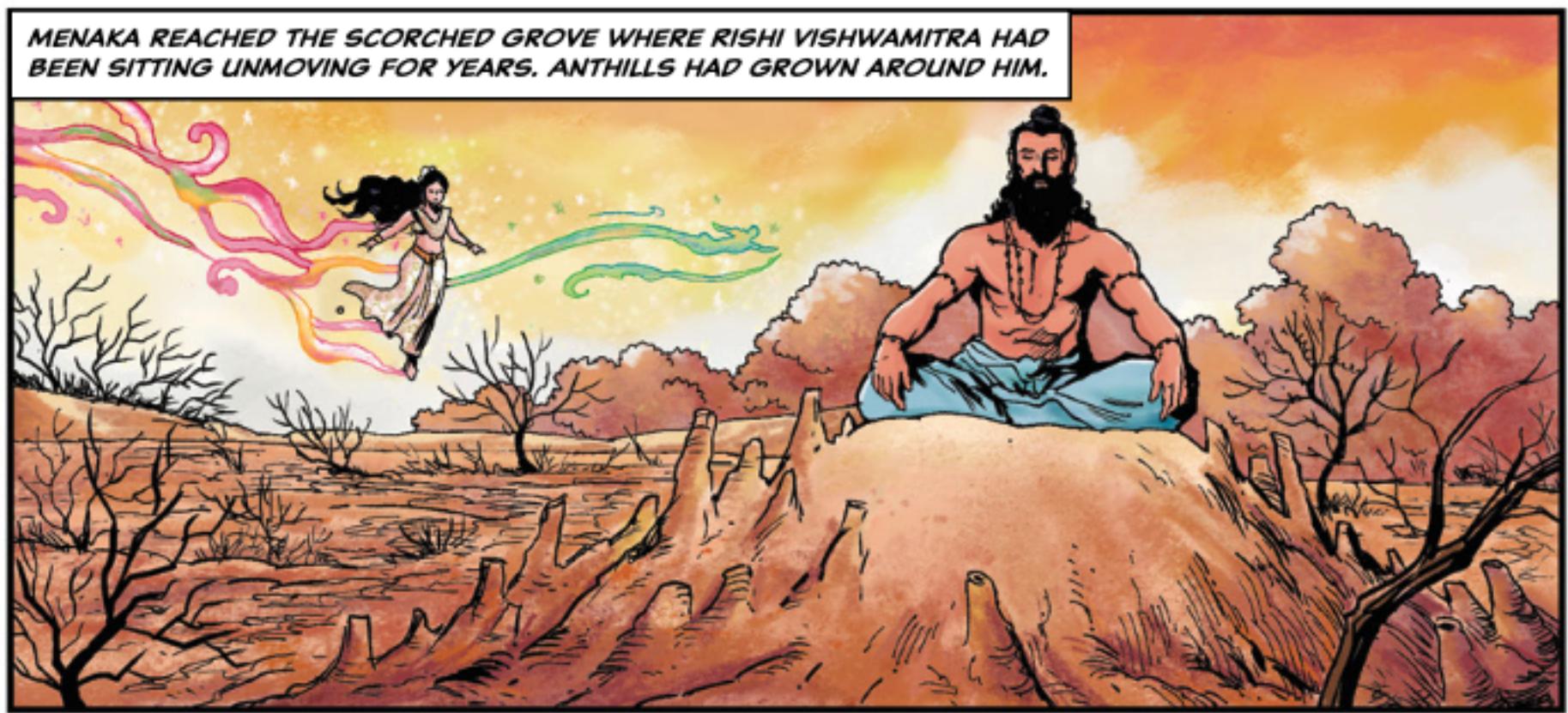
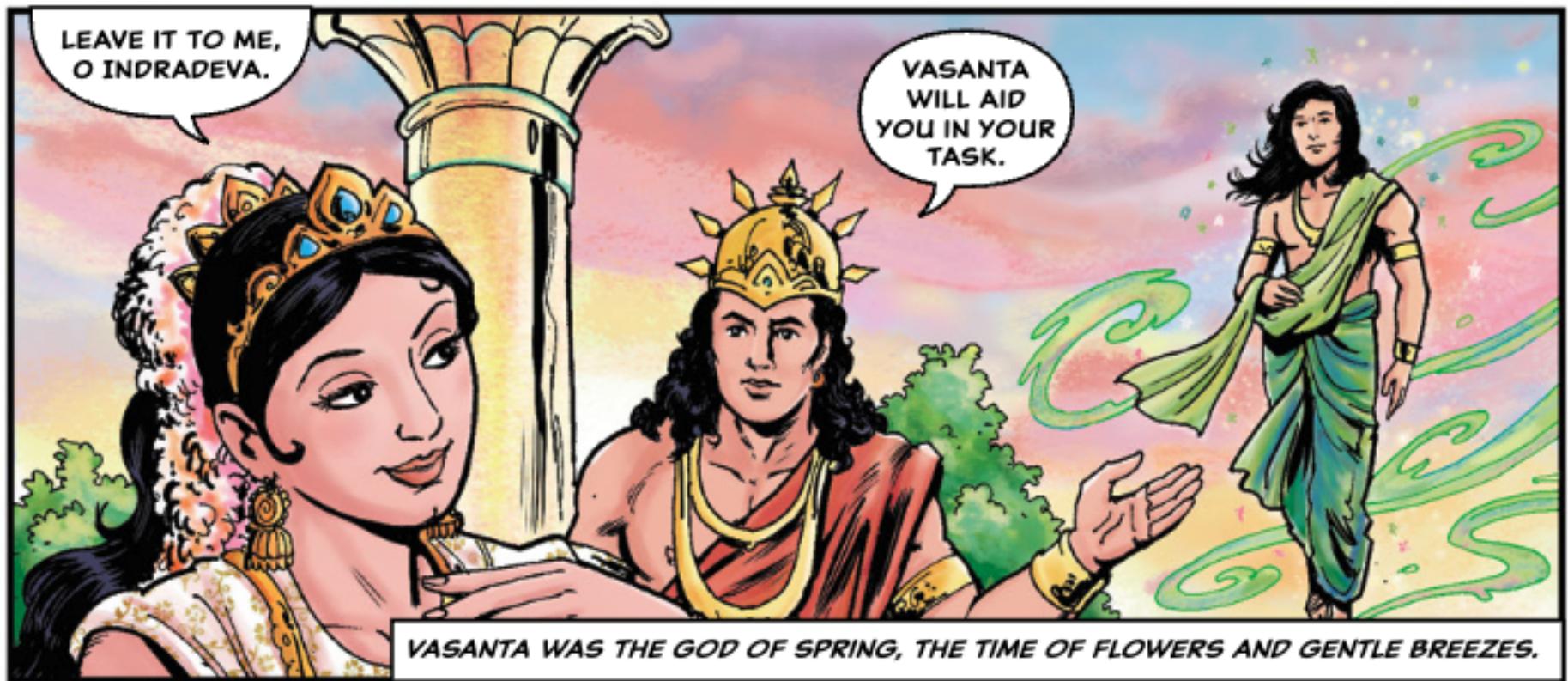
MANY APSARAS EMERGED FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN DURING THE SAGARMANTHANA\*. THEY WERE SKILLED IN MUSIC, DANCE, ART AND POETRY AND GRACED THE COURTS OF INDRA AND KUBERA. THESE CELESTIAL NYMPHS WERE OFTEN SENT ON ERRANDS, ESPECIALLY BY INDRA.

MENAKA WAS ONE OF THE APSARAS WHO HAD APPEARED DURING THE CHURNING. SHE SHONE LIKE A PEARL AND WAS GRACEFUL LIKE A SWAN. SHE DANCED FOR THE DEVAS AT THE COURT OF INDRA.



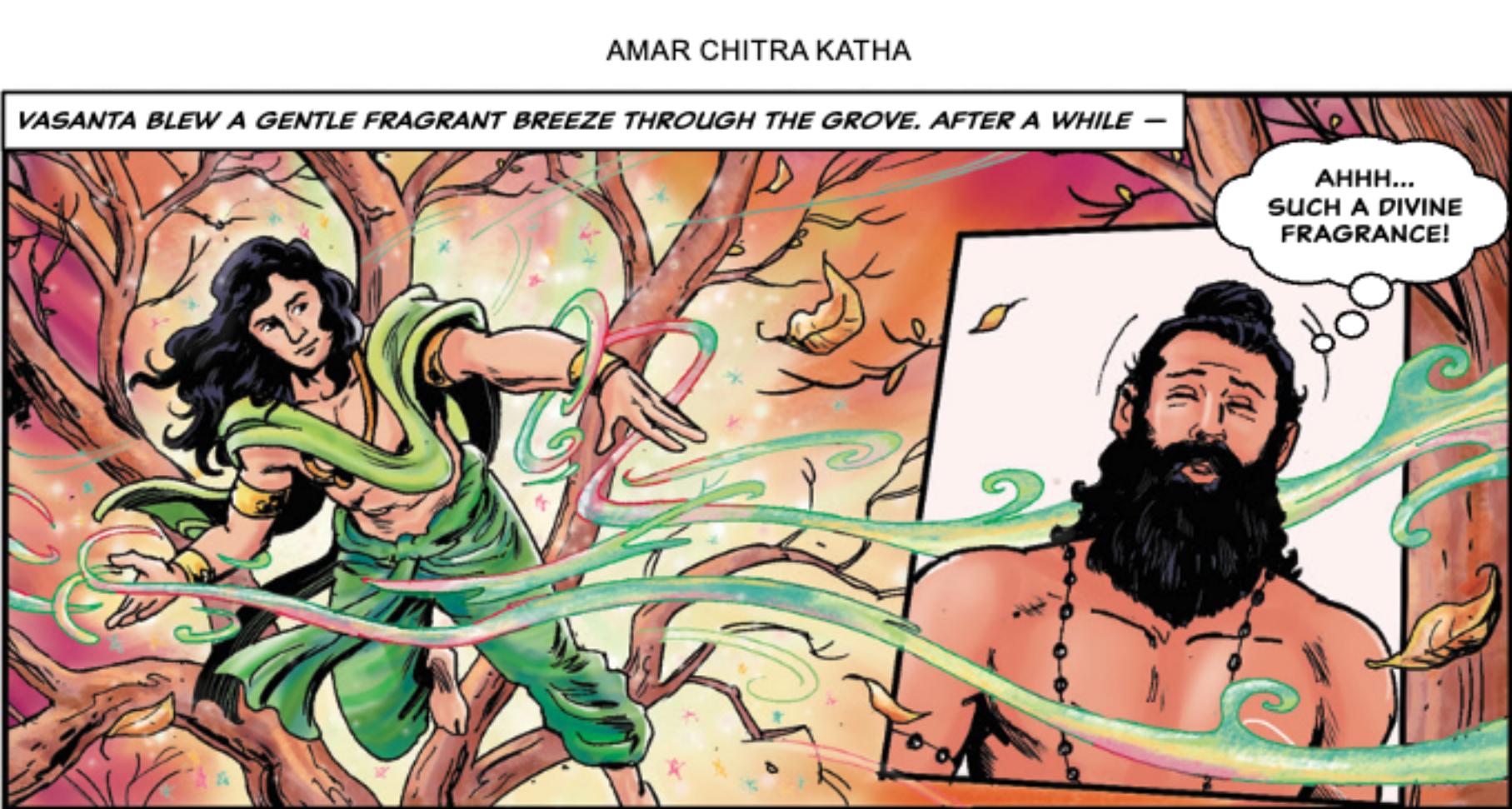


## MENAKA



VASANTA BLEW A GENTLE FRAGRANT BREEZE THROUGH THE GROVE. AFTER A WHILE —

AHHH...  
SUCH A DIVINE  
FRAGRANCE!

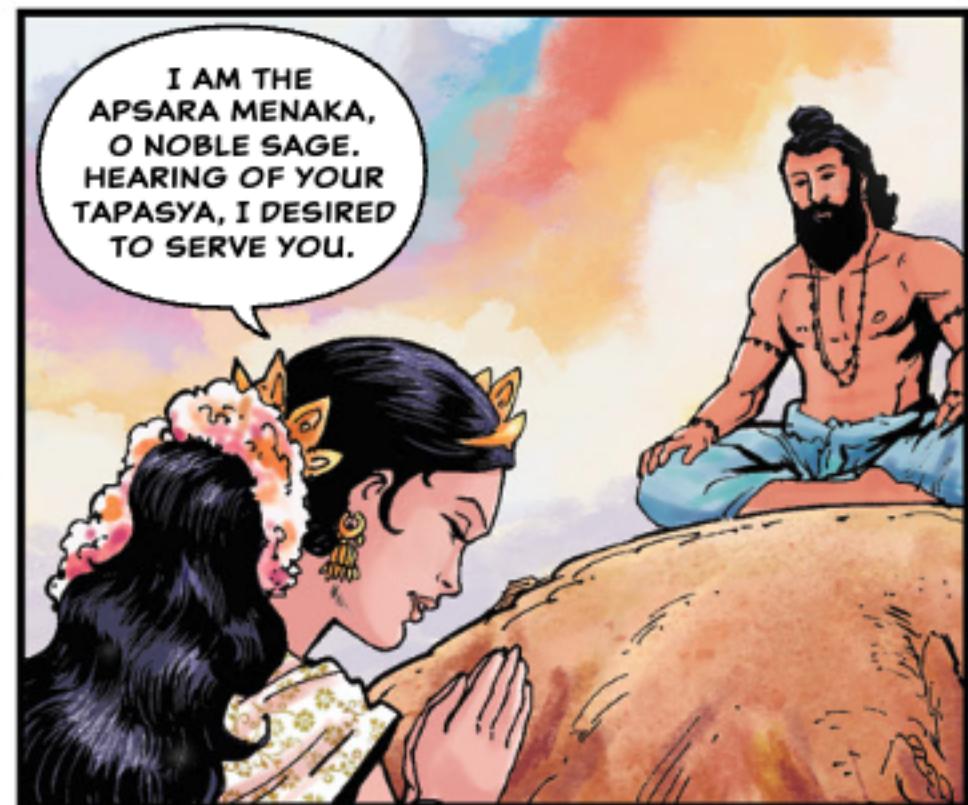


HE OPENED HIS EYES AND SAW MENAKA.

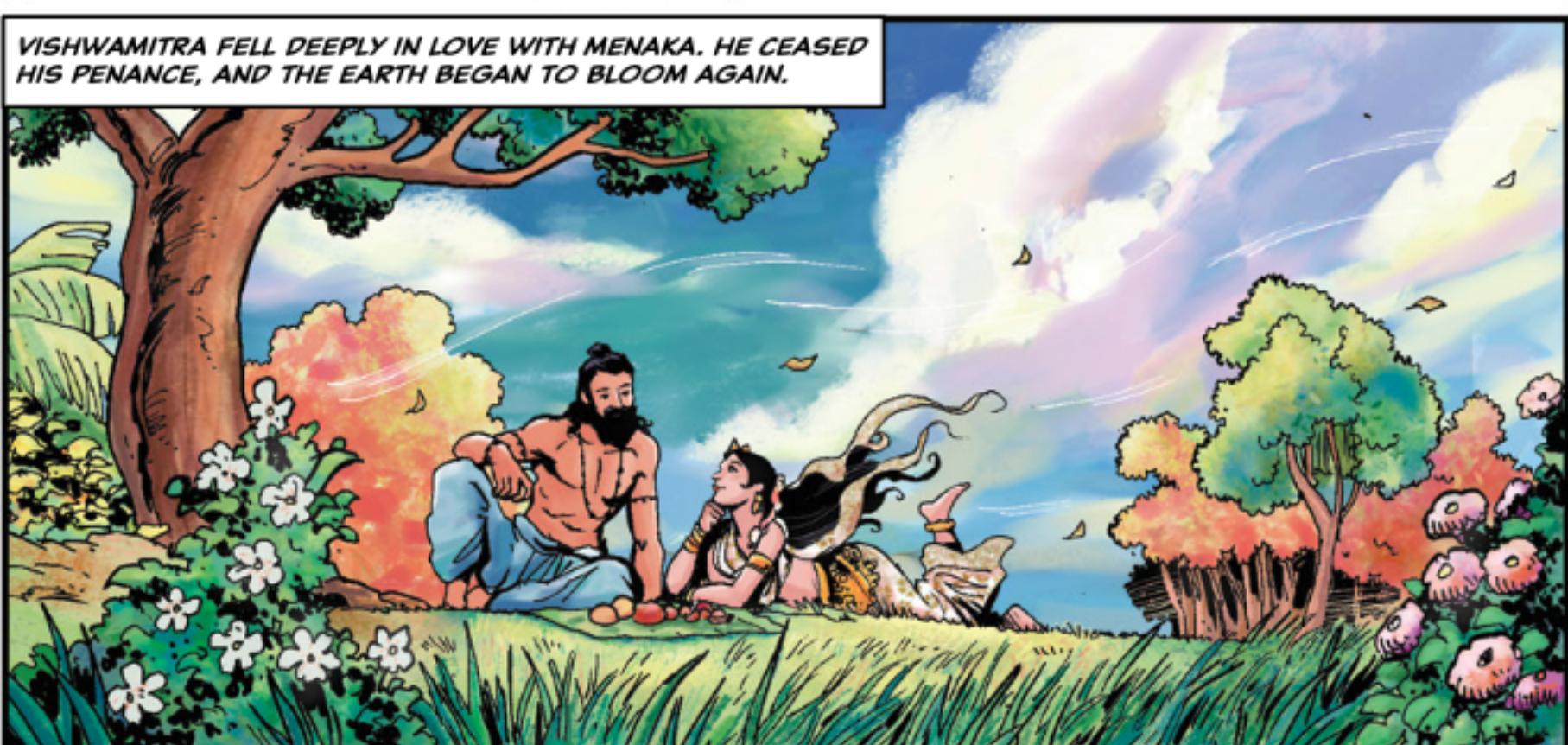
SHE IS AS  
RADIANT AS  
THE SUN.

WHO  
ARE YOU,  
BEAUTIFUL  
LADY?

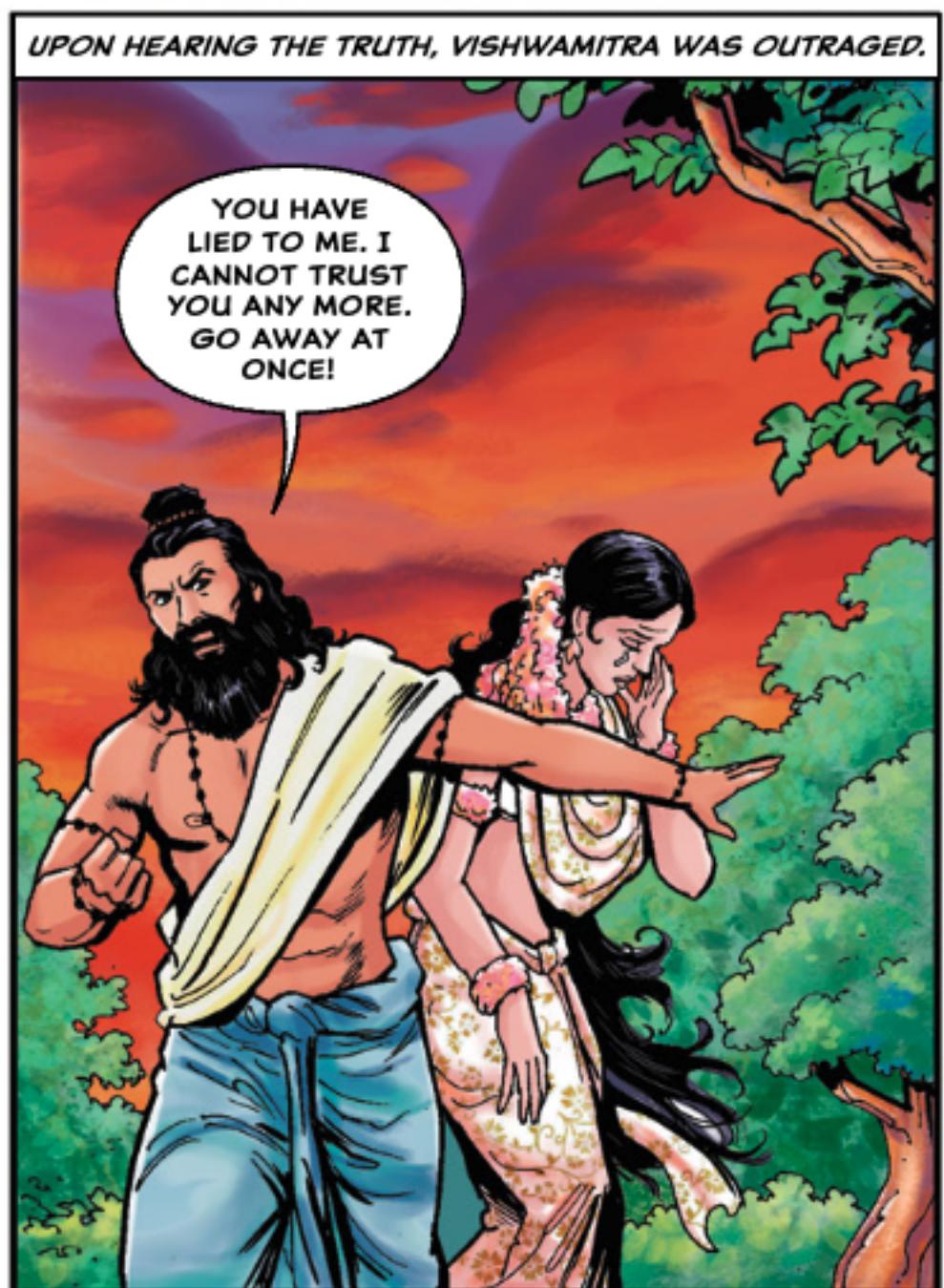
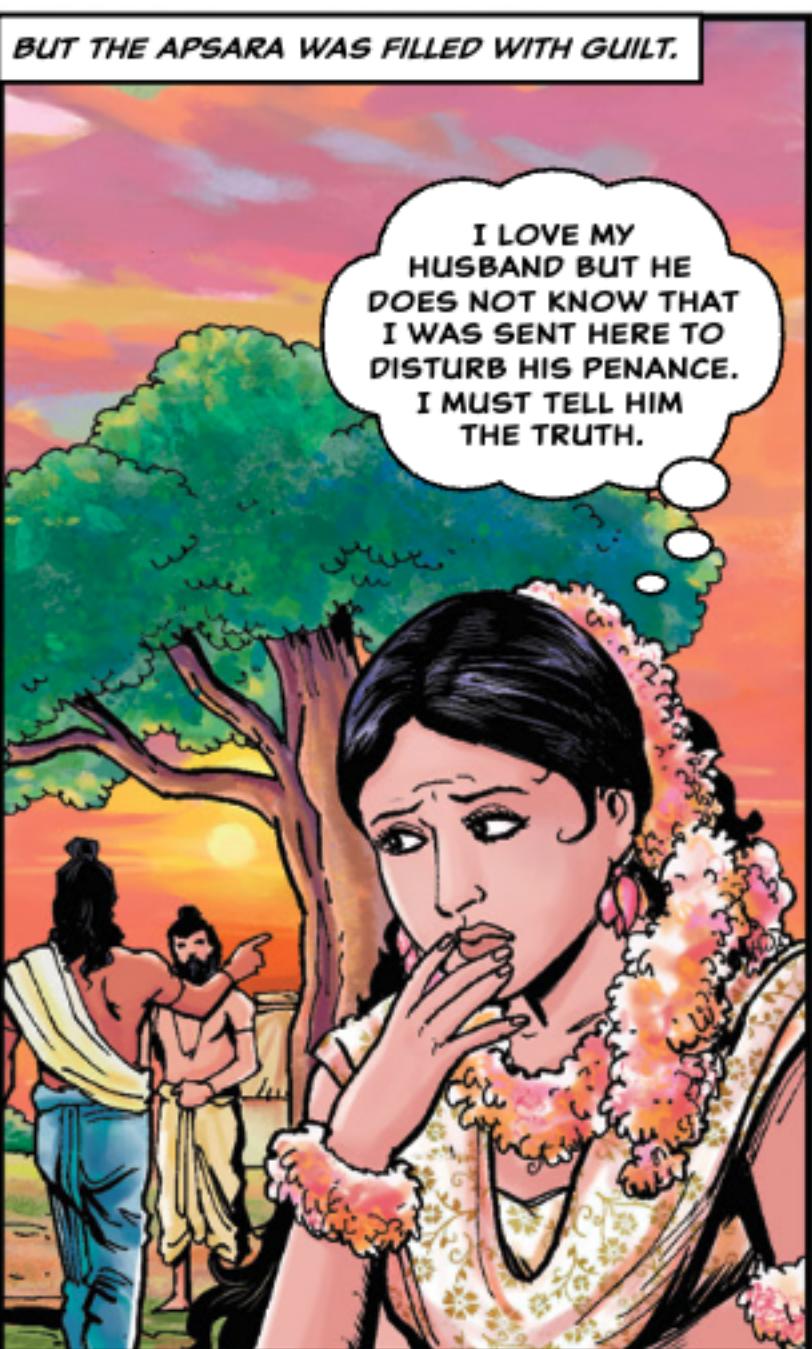
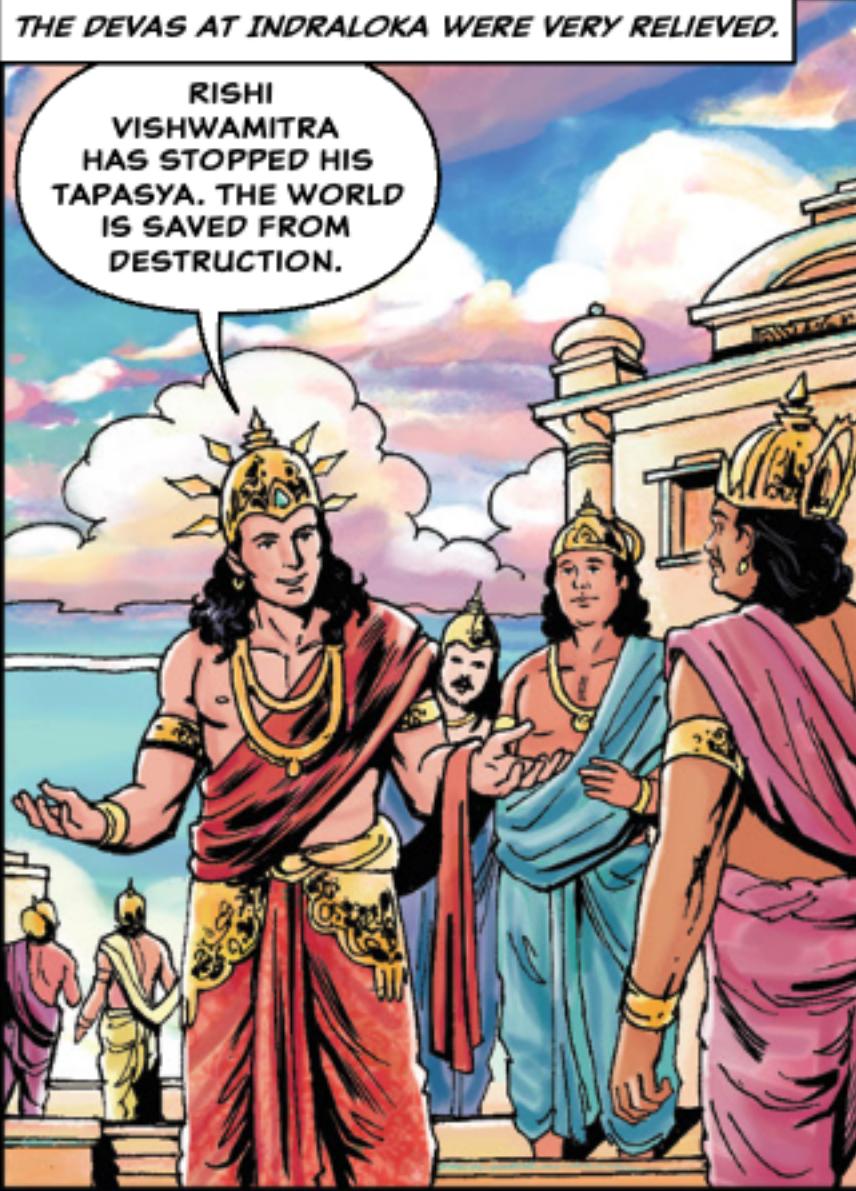
I AM THE  
APSARA MENAKA,  
O NOBLE SAGE.  
HEARING OF YOUR  
TAPASYA, I DESIRED  
TO SERVE YOU.

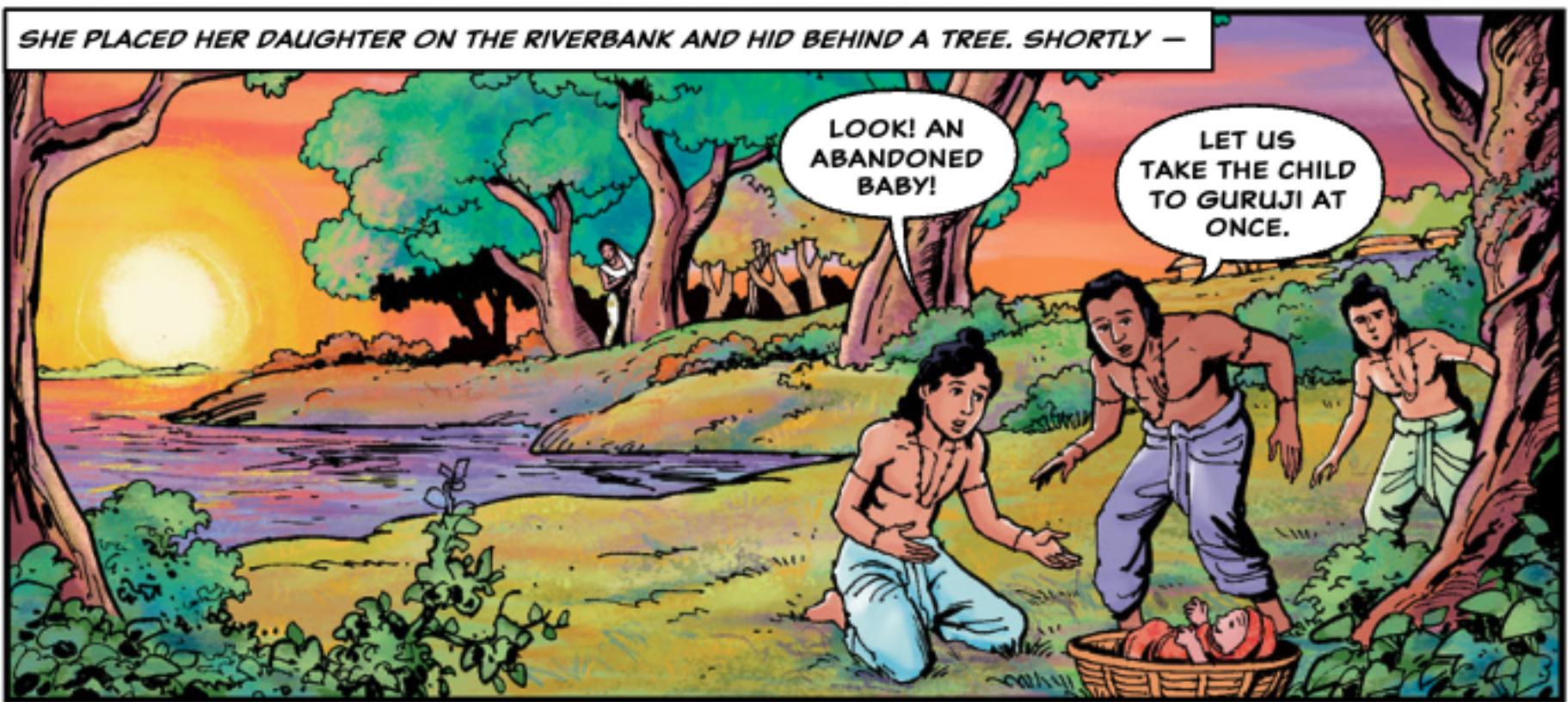
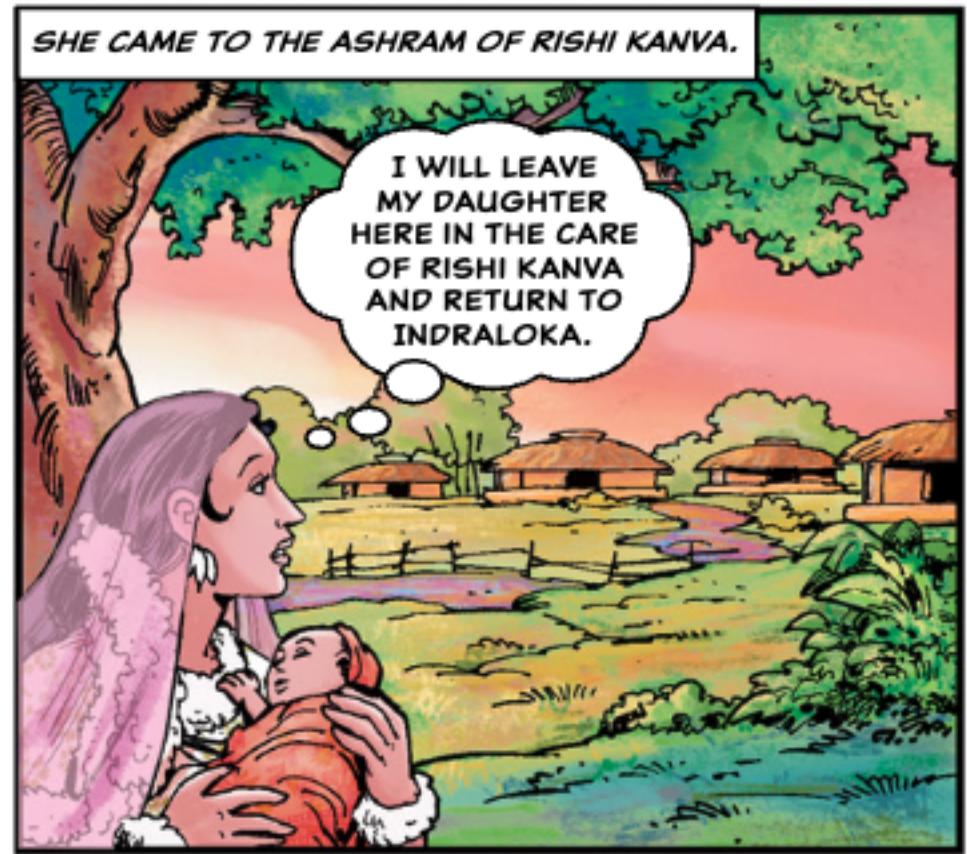


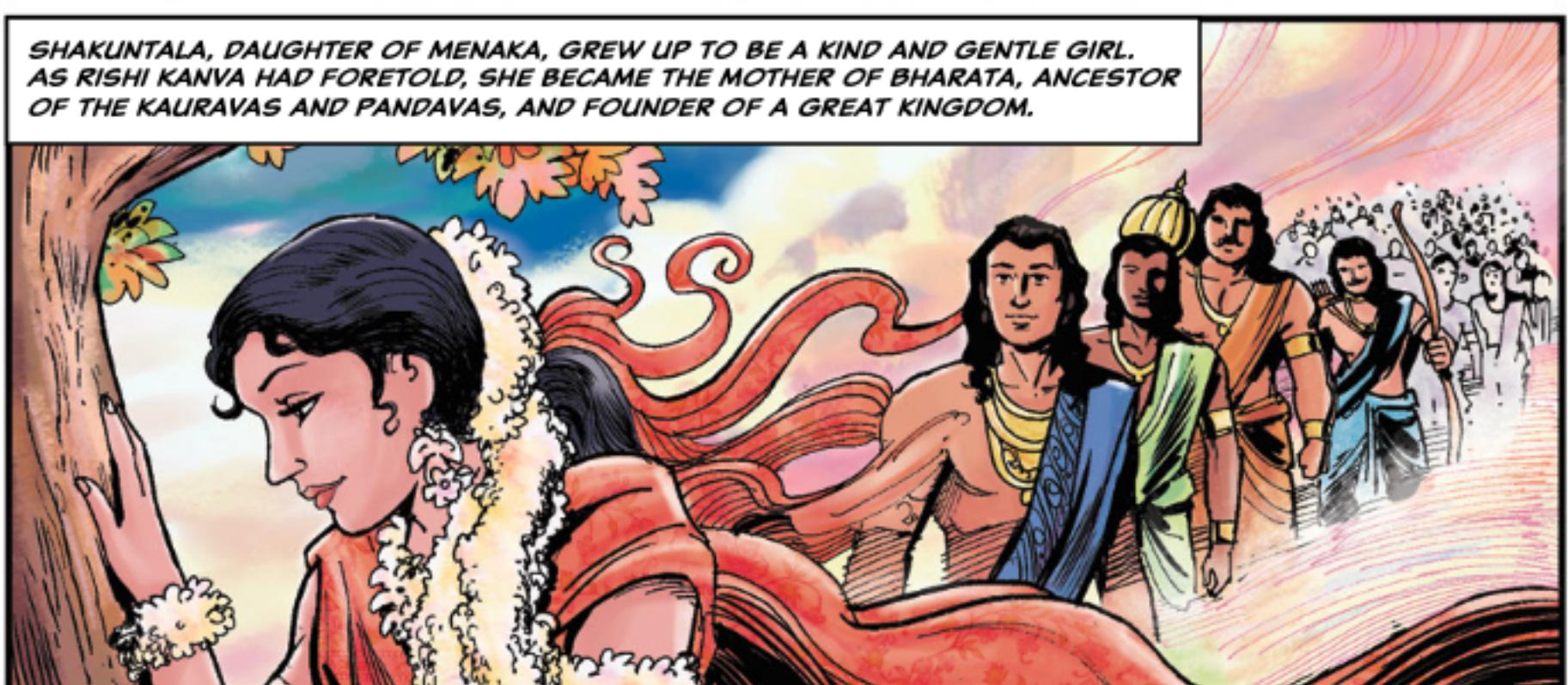
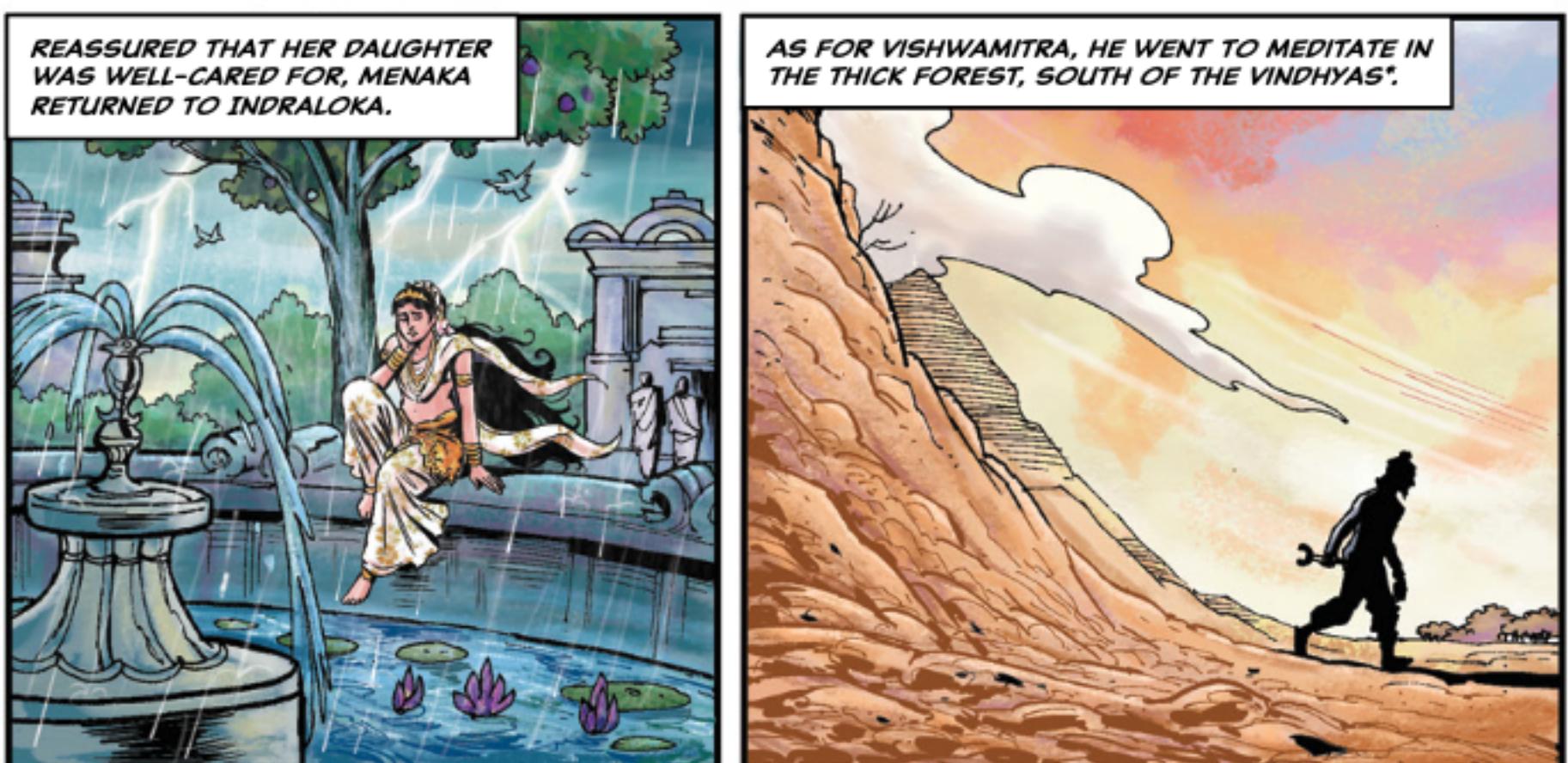
VISHWAMITRA FELL DEEPLY IN LOVE WITH MENAKA. HE CEASED  
HIS PENANCE, AND THE EARTH BEGAN TO BLOOM AGAIN.



## MENAKA







\*A MOUNTAIN RANGE IN CENTRAL INDIA

# TILOTTAMA

SOMETIMES, THE GODS WOULD CREATE APSARAS MAGICALLY TO HELP THEM IN TIMES OF CRISIS. SUCH IS THE STORY OF THE BEAUTIFUL TILOTTAMA.

ONCE UPON A TIME, AN ASURA CHIEFTAIN CALLED NISHUMBA LIVED IN THE VINDHYA MOUNTAINS. HE HAD TWO SONS – SUNDA AND UPASUNDA.



THEY SPREAD TERROR IN THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES –



ONE DAY –



ACCORDINGLY, SUNDA AND UPASUNDA BEGAN THEIR PENANCE.

OM  
BRAHMAYE  
NAMAH!

THE FORCE OF THEIR PENANCE WAS SO STRONG THAT IT REACHED DEVALOKA.

BRAHMADEV,  
SOMEONE IS SEEKING  
YOUR FAVOUR ON  
EARTH. ATTEND TO  
THEM BEFORE THEIR  
TAPAS DESTROYS  
THE WORLD.

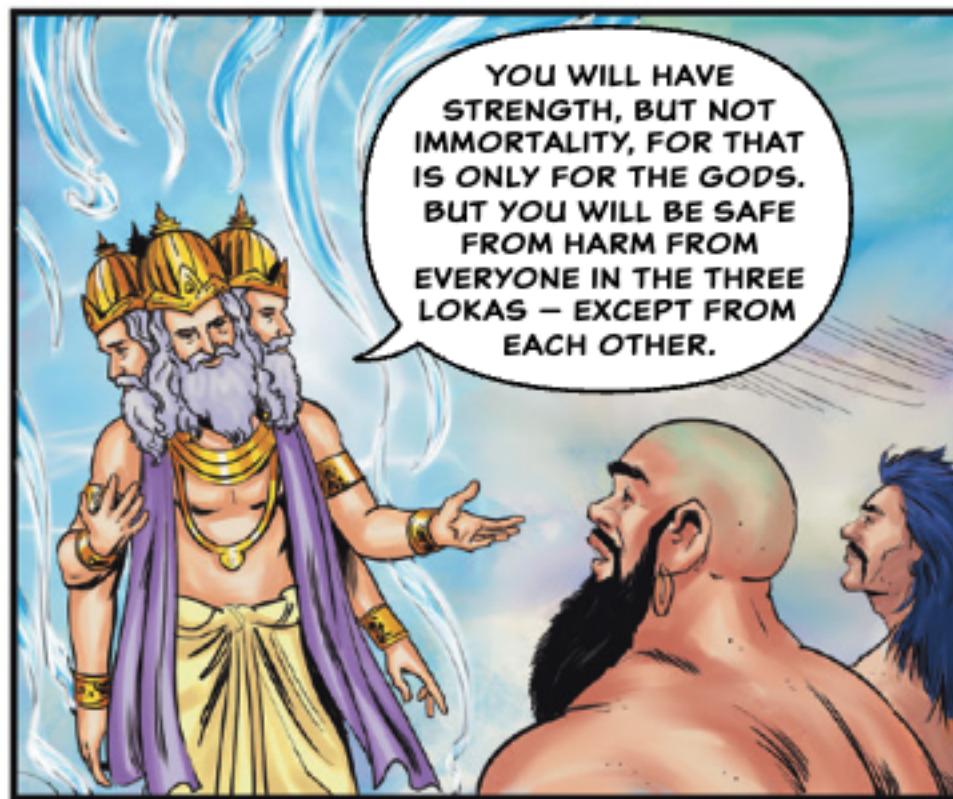
BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE THE TWO BROTHERS.

WHAT IS  
IT YOU SEEK,  
MY SONS?

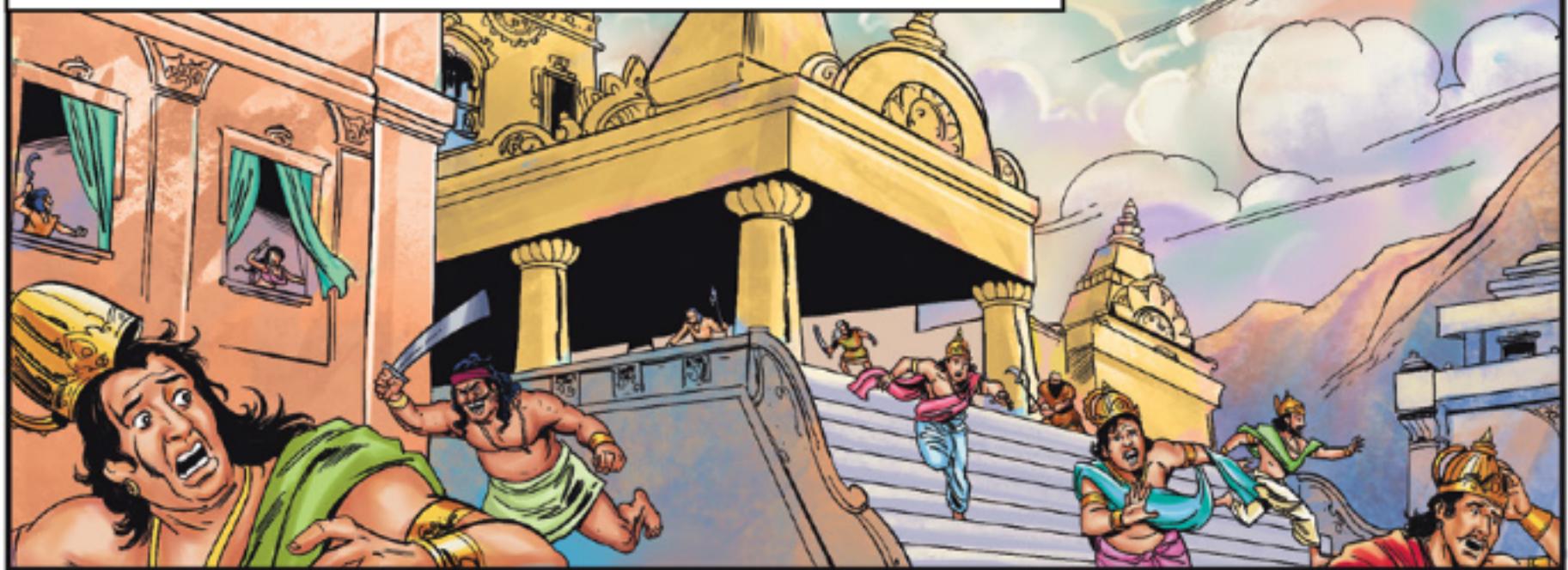
GRANT US  
SUPERHUMAN  
STRENGTH,  
O LORD.

GRANT US  
IMMORTALITY,  
O LORD.

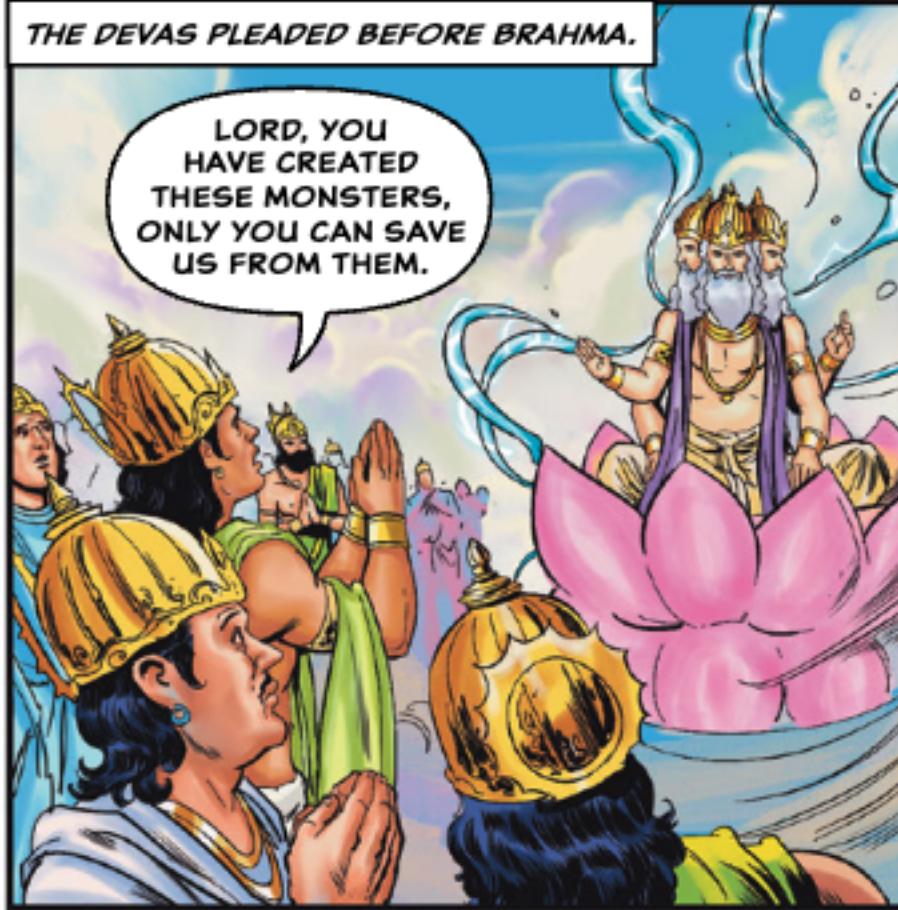
IF I GIVE  
THEM THE BOONS  
THEY SEEK, THEY WILL  
RAMPAGE ACROSS THE  
WORLD AND CAUSE  
UNTOLD SUFFERING.



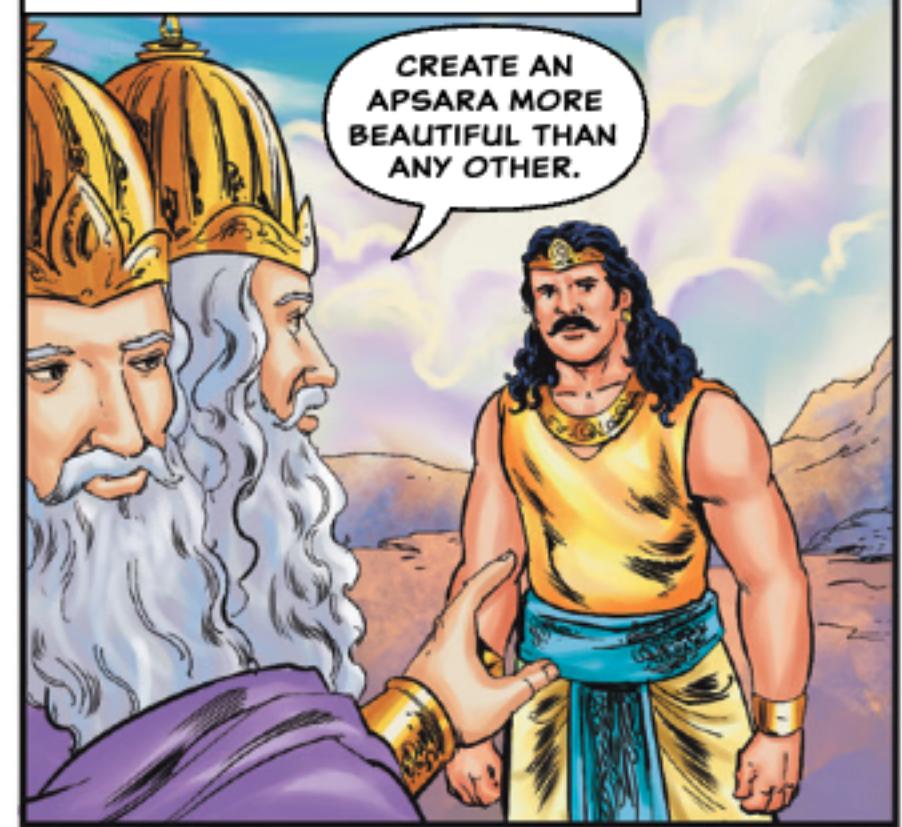
THEN THEY ATTACKED SVARGA AND DROVE THE DEVAS OUT OF INDRALOKA.



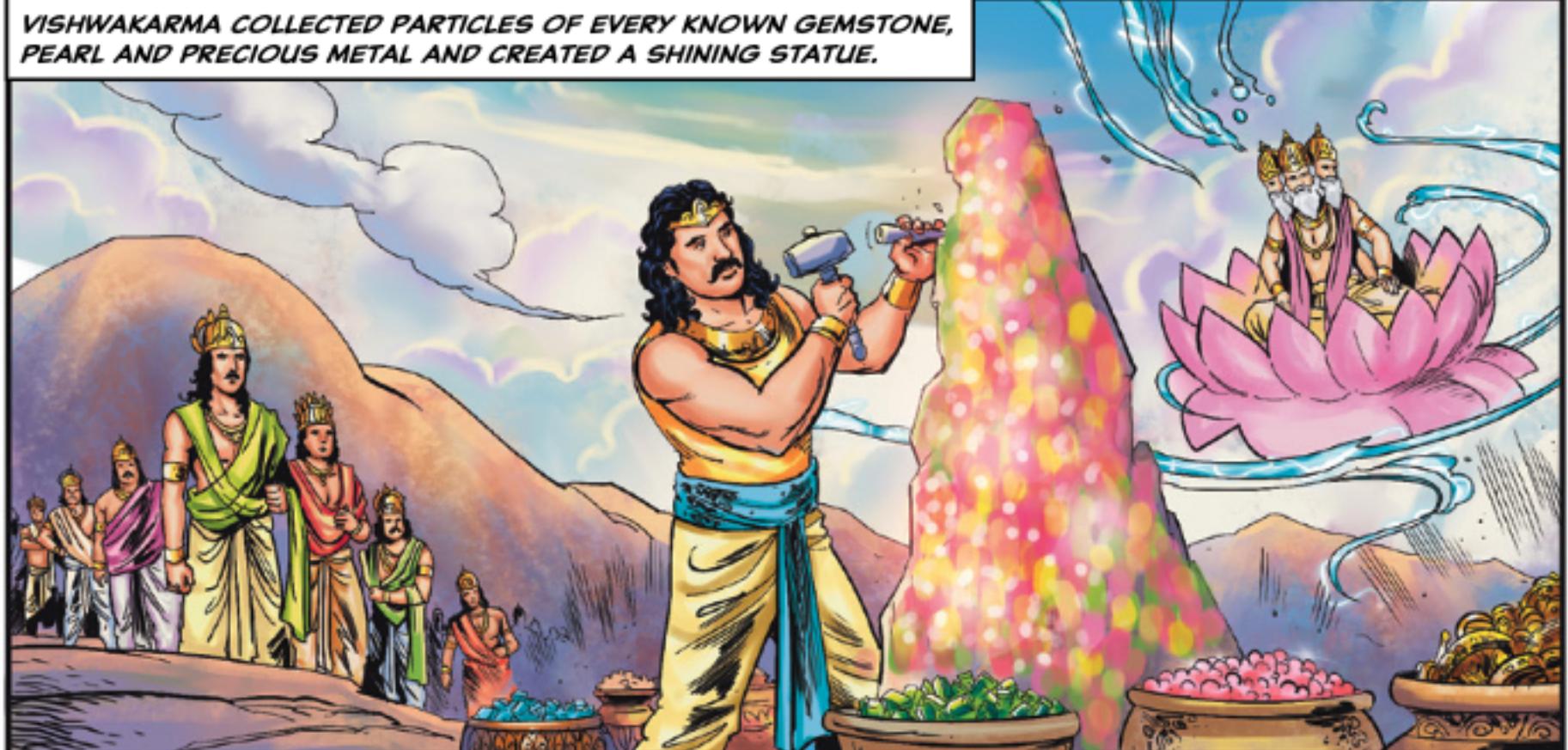
THE DEVAS PLEADED BEFORE BRAHMA.



BRAHMA SUMMONED VISHWAKARMA, THE CELESTIAL CRAFTSMAN.



VISHWAKARMA COLLECTED PARTICLES OF EVERY KNOWN GEMSTONE, PEARL AND PRECIOUS METAL AND CREATED A SHINING STATUE.



HE BREATHED LIFE INTO THE STATUE, AND IT TURNED INTO A RADIANT APSARA.

AH! WHAT  
BRILLIANCE!

HER  
NAME SHALL BE  
TILOTTAMA\*, FOR  
EVERY ATOM OF  
HER PERSON IS  
PERFECT.

BRAHMA EXPLAINED THE  
PLAN TO TILOTTAMA.

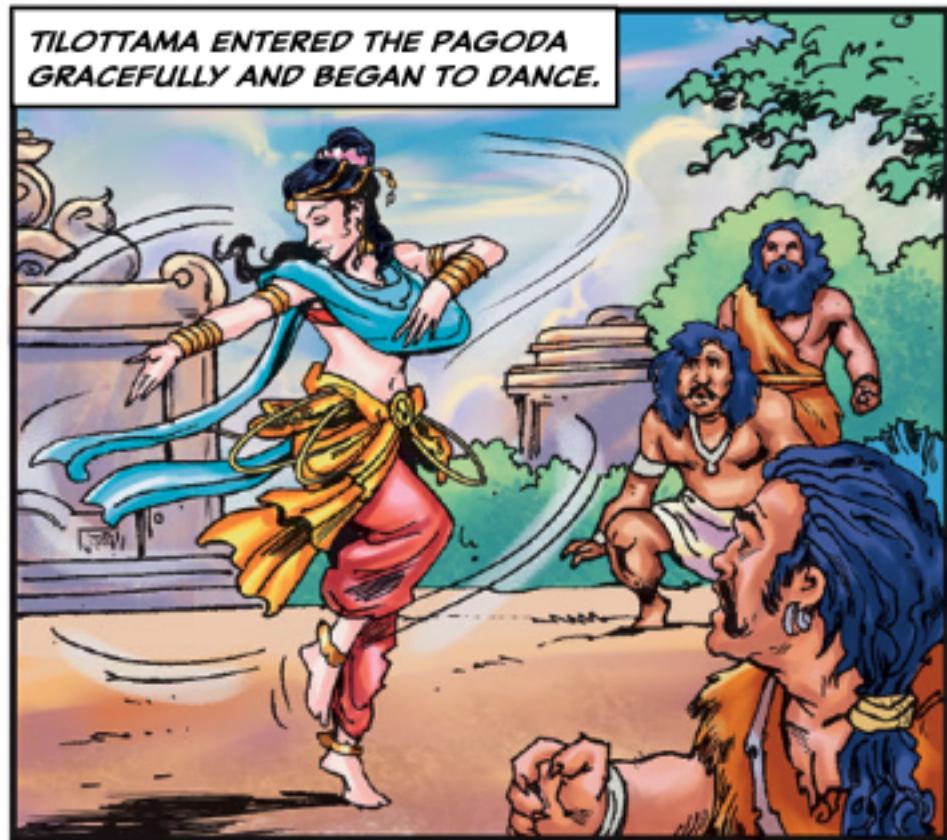
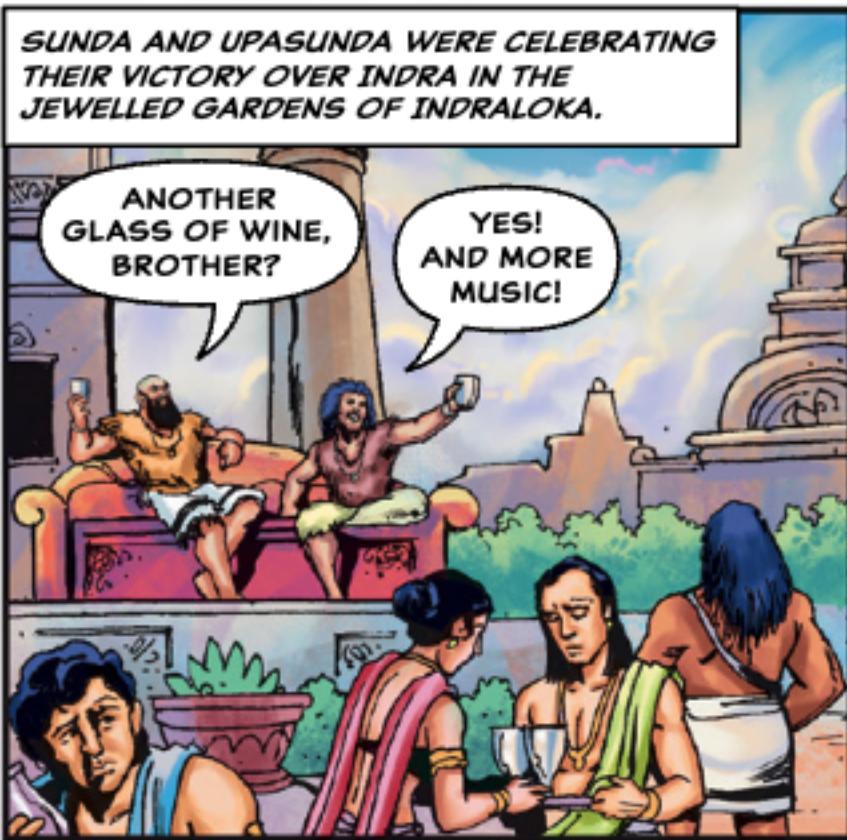
WHAT IS  
YOUR WISH,  
BRAHMADEVA?

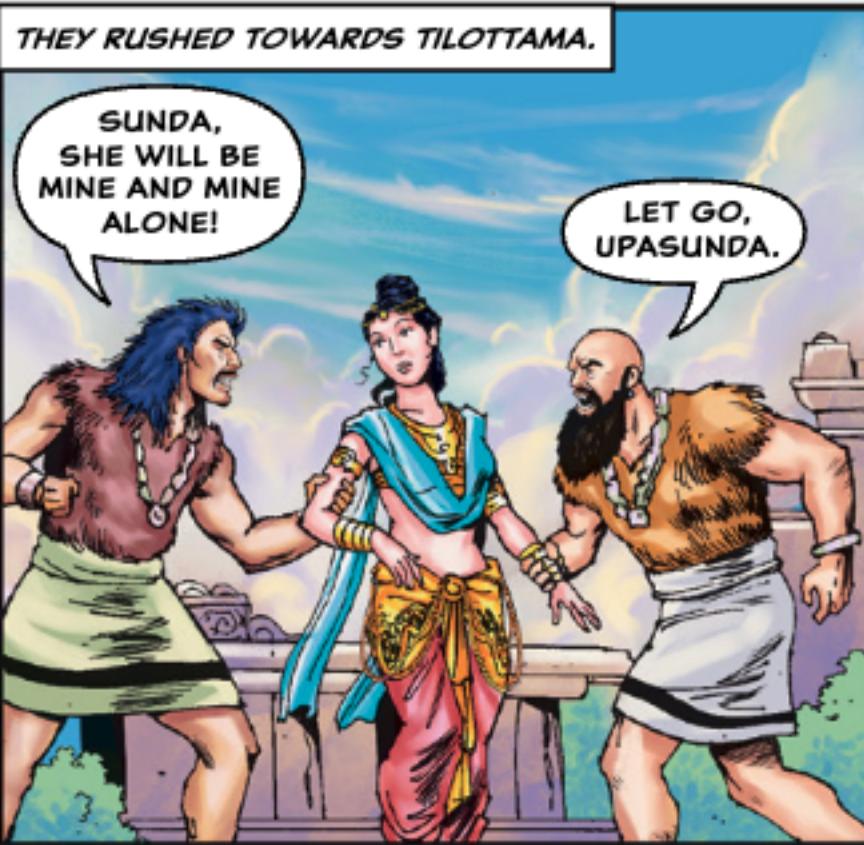
YOU MUST  
DO EXACTLY AS  
INSTRUCTED. IT IS  
THE ONLY WAY TO  
SAVE THE WORLD  
FROM THESE  
DEMONS.



\*TILL (PARTICLE/ATOM) + UTTAMA (PERFECTION)

## TILOTTAMA





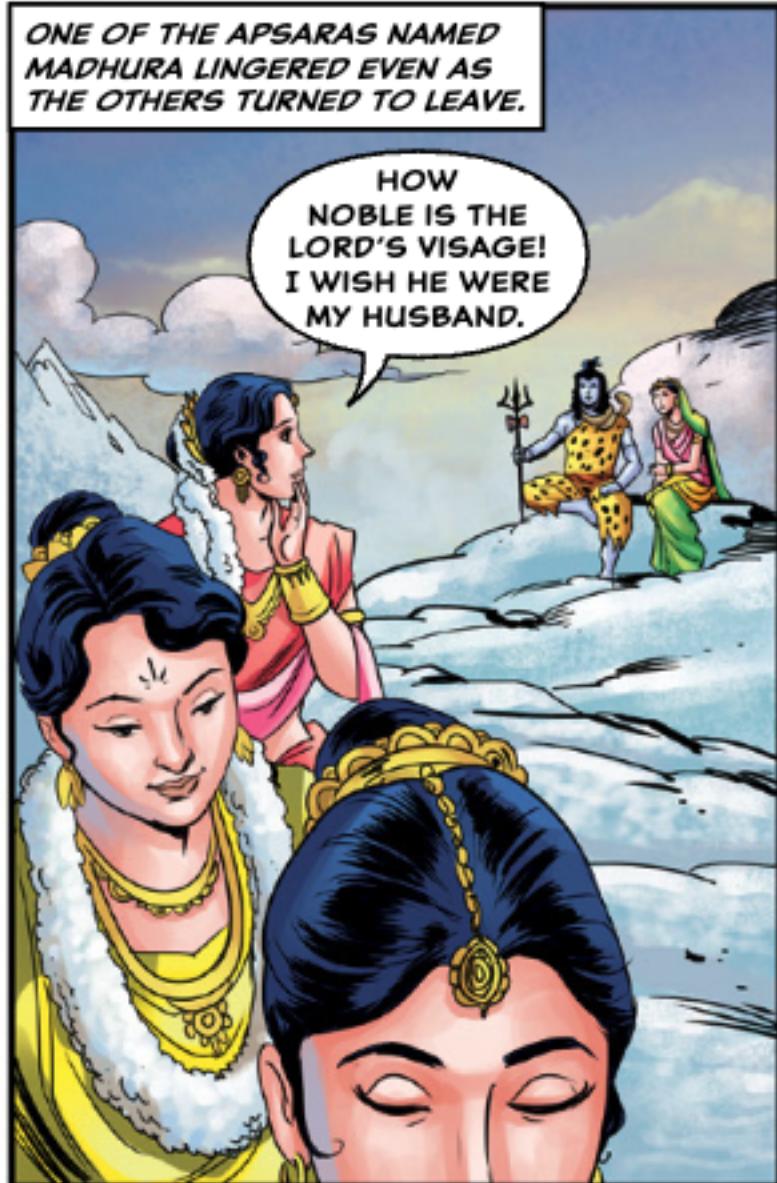
# MADHURA

SOMETIMES, A CURSE WOULD SEND AN APSARA INTO A NEW LIFE. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED WITH MADHURA.

ONE FINE SPRING DAY, MANY APSARAS GATHERED TO CELEBRATE A FESTIVAL AT SHIVA AND PARVATI'S ABODE ON MOUNT KAILASHA. THEY CAME BEFORE THE DIVINE COUPLE TO SEEK THEIR BLESSINGS.



ONE OF THE APSARAS NAMED MADHURA LINGERED EVEN AS THE OTHERS TURNED TO LEAVE.



HEARING MADHURA'S WORDS, PARVATI WAS FURIOUS.



INSTANTLY —



SHIVA WAS ANNOYED WITH PARVATI'S JEALOUSY.



SHIVA WENT TO THE WELL —



HEARING THIS, MADHURA FELT SOME HOPE AND SETTLED DOWN TO WAIT.



## MADHURA

THE YEARS PASSED, AND EVENTS UNFOLDED AS SHIVA HAD FORESEEN. ONE DAY, A GREAT ASURA KING, MAYASURA, VISITED DEVALOKA.

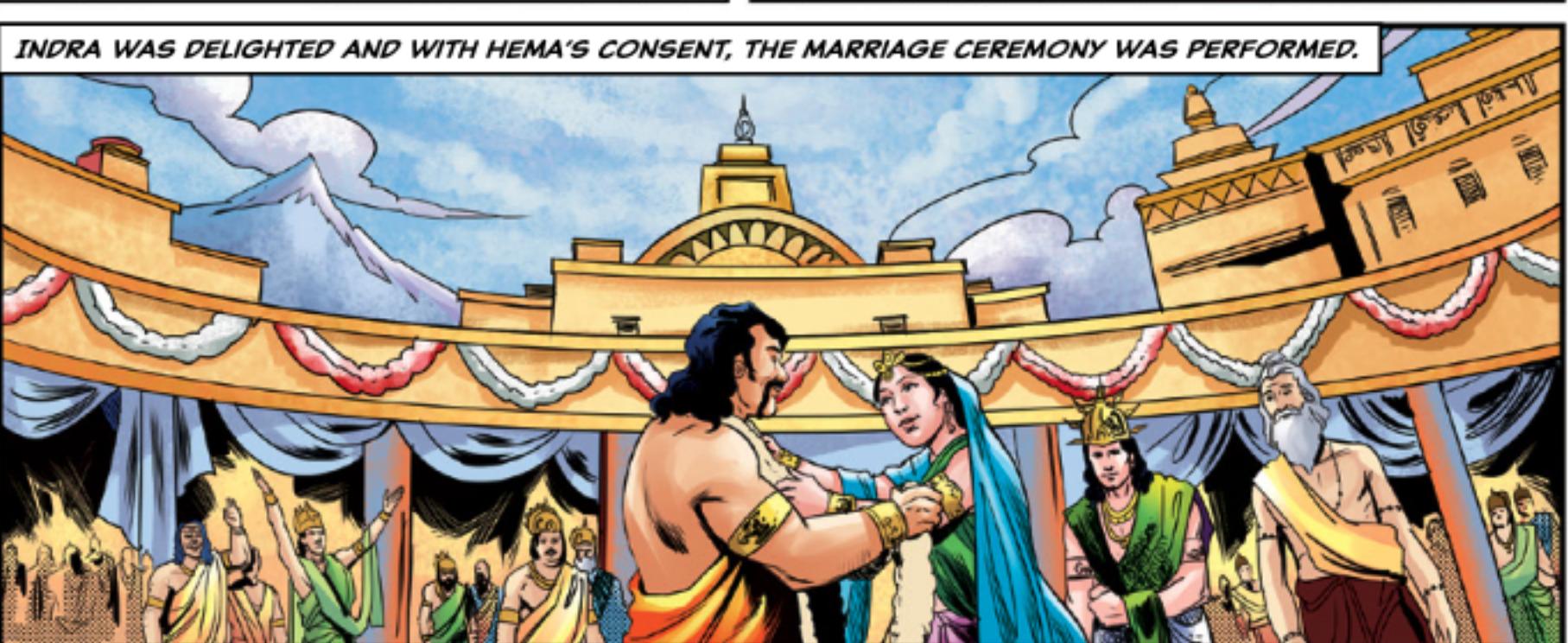


MAYASURA WAS A BRILLIANT ARCHITECT AND HAD BUILT PALACES FOR BOTH DEVAS AND ASURAS.

A BEAUTIFUL APSARA NAMED HEMA WAS DANCING AT THE ASSEMBLY. MAYASURA FELL INSTANTLY IN LOVE WITH HER.



INDRA WAS DELIGHTED AND WITH HEMA'S CONSENT, THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY WAS PERFORMED.



I WILL BUILD  
A BEAUTIFUL CITY  
ON THE SLOPES OF  
HIMAVAN\*.

THAT WILL  
BE WONDERFUL,  
MY HUSBAND.

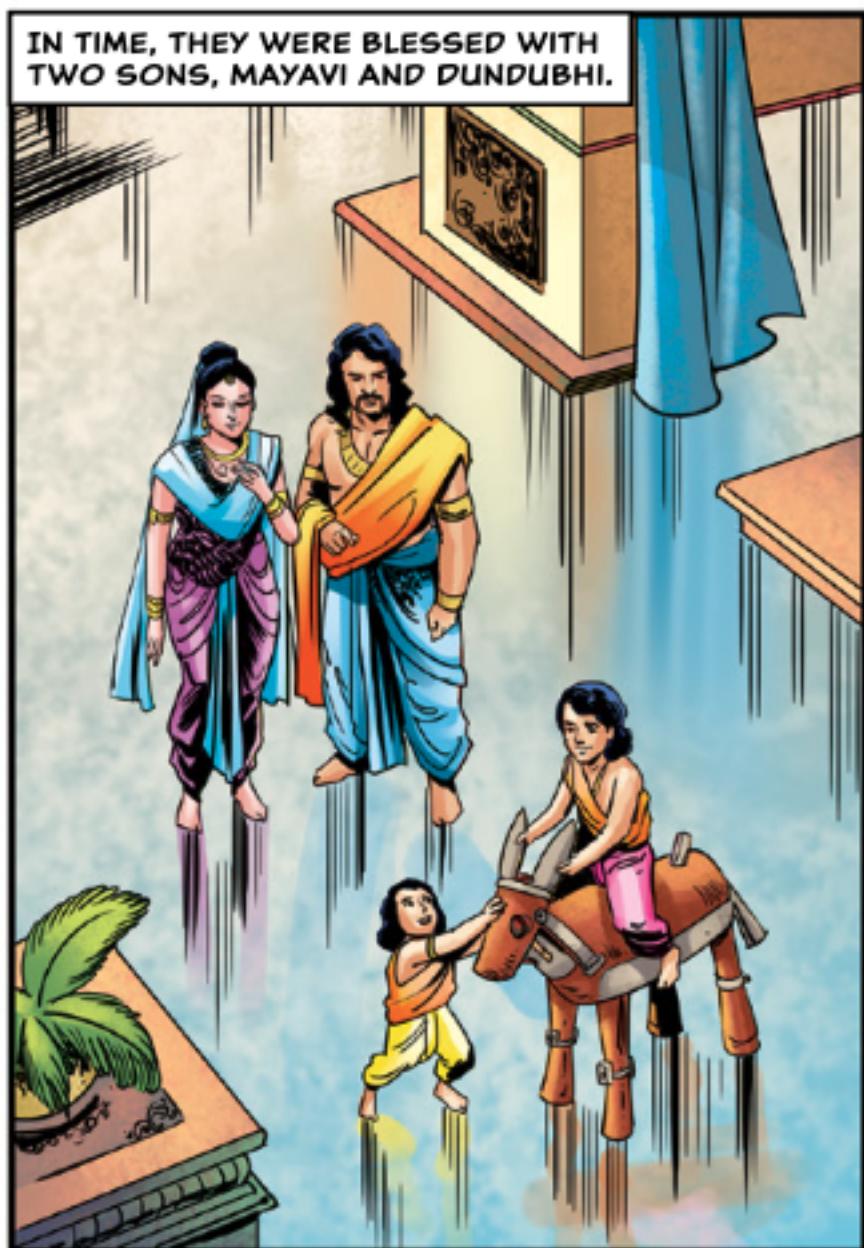
HEMA WAS VERY CONTENT WITH HER KIND-HEARTED AND LOVING HUSBAND.

\*ANOTHER NAME FOR THE FORESTED SLOPES OF THE HIMALAYAS

IN VERY LITTLE TIME, A GRAND CITY AND PALACE WERE ERECTED.



IN TIME, THEY WERE BLESSED WITH TWO SONS, MAYAVI AND DUNDUBHI.

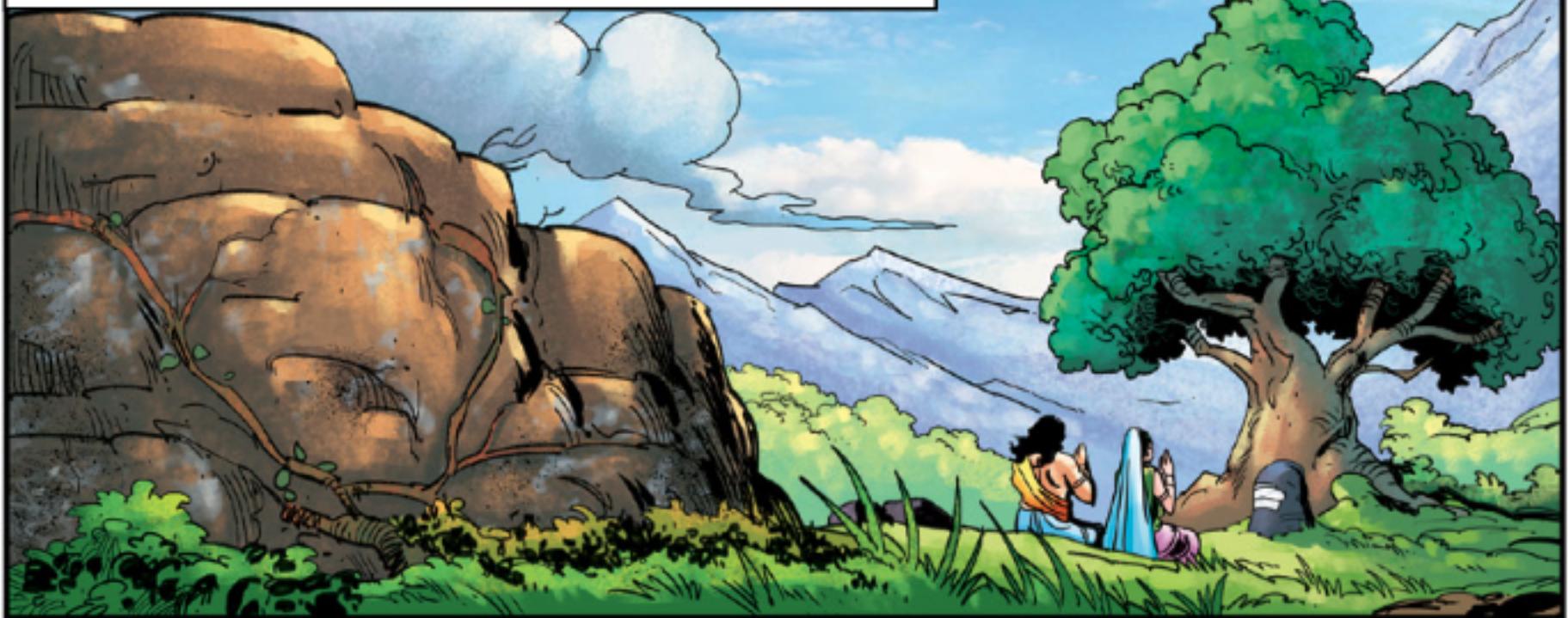


BUT MAYASURA LONGED FOR A DAUGHTER.



## MADHURA

THEY WENT TO A NEARBY SACRED GROVE AND OFFERED PRAYERS NEAR THE SAME WELL WHERE MADHURA WAS IMPRISONED.



JUST AS THEY FINISHED THEIR PRAYERS, THE 12 YEARS OF MADHURA'S CURSE WERE COMPLETED, AND SHE WAS CHANGED BACK INTO A WOMAN.

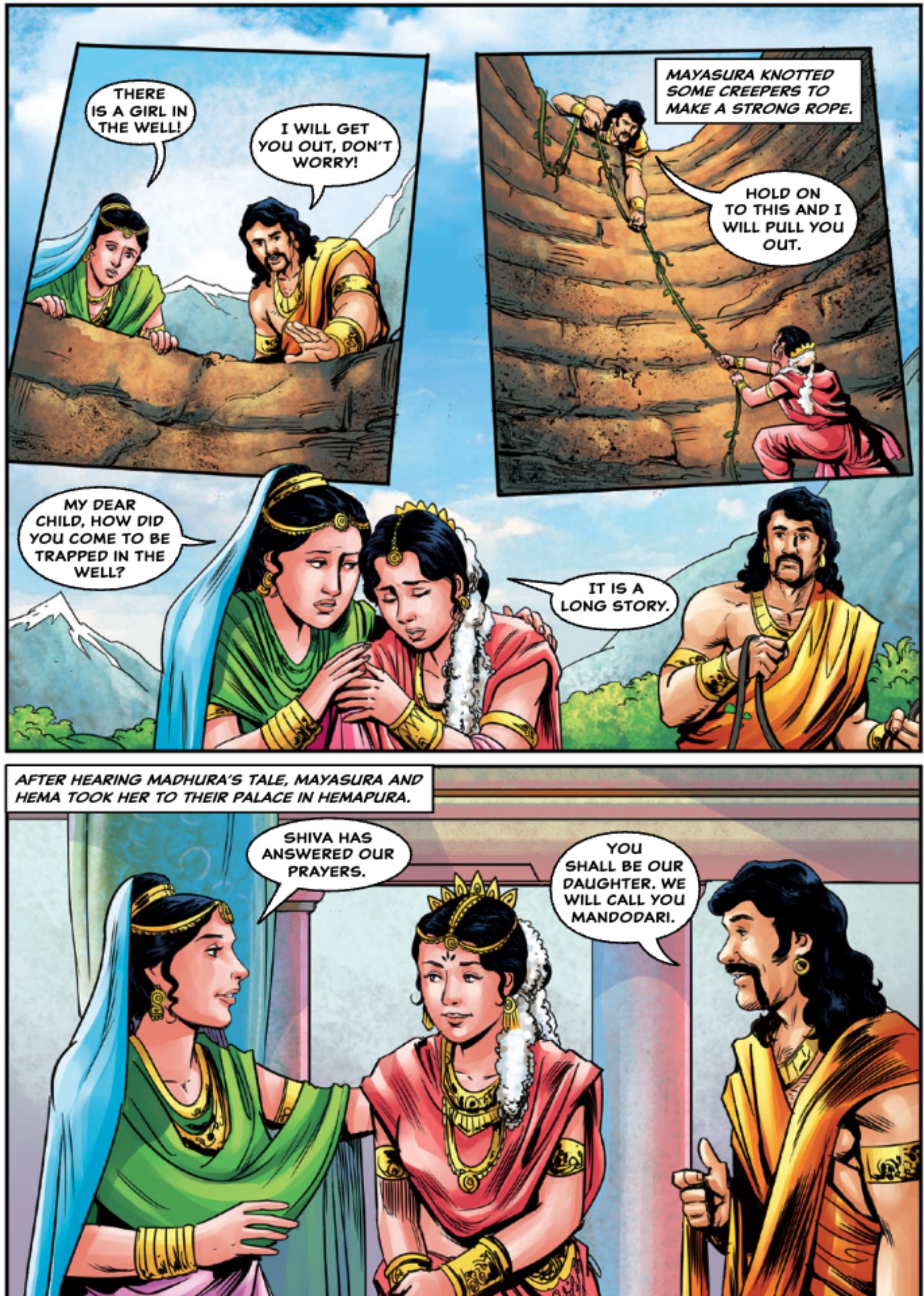


WHAT IS THAT VOICE?

IT'S COMING FROM THE WELL!

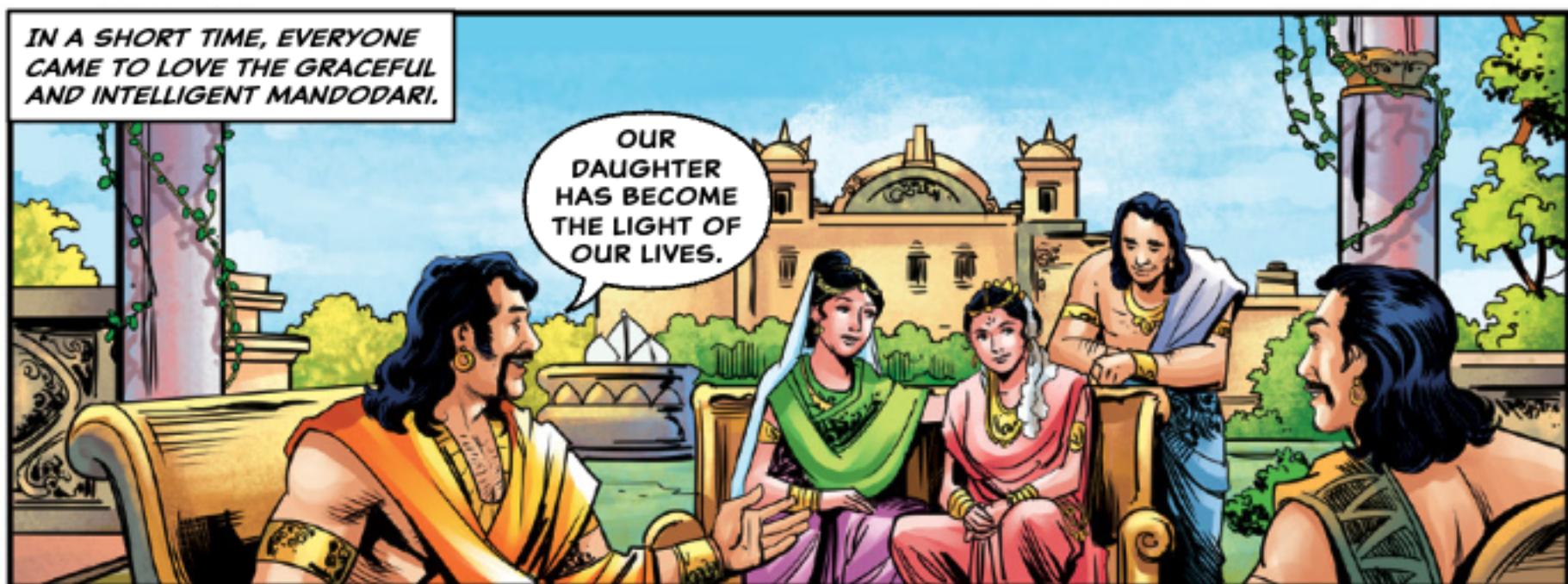
HELP





IN A SHORT TIME, EVERYONE CAME TO LOVE THE GRACEFUL AND INTELLIGENT MANDODARI.

OUR DAUGHTER HAS BECOME THE LIGHT OF OUR LIVES.



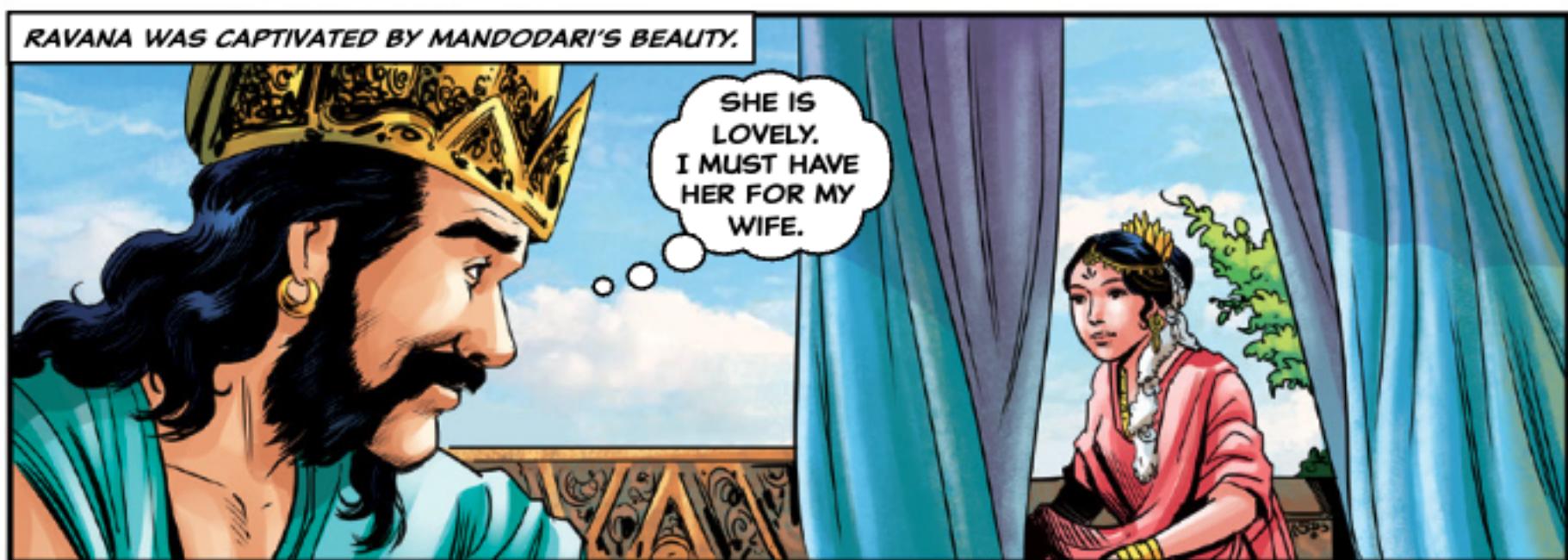
ONE DAY, RAVANA, THE RAKSHASA KING OF LANKA, STOPPED IN HEMAPURA ON HIS WAY HOME FROM A VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGN.

WELCOME, RAVANA!

RAVANA WAS FAMOUS FOR HIS SCHOLARLY WISDOM AND HIS VALOUR IN BATTLE.

RAVANA WAS CAPTIVATED BY MANDODARI'S BEAUTY.

SHE IS LOVELY. I MUST HAVE HER FOR MY WIFE.



MANDODARI, HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS? RAVANA HAS ASKED FOR YOUR HAND IN MARRIAGE!

HE IS SO HANDSOME AND STRONG! SHIVA'S WORDS HAVE COME TRUE.



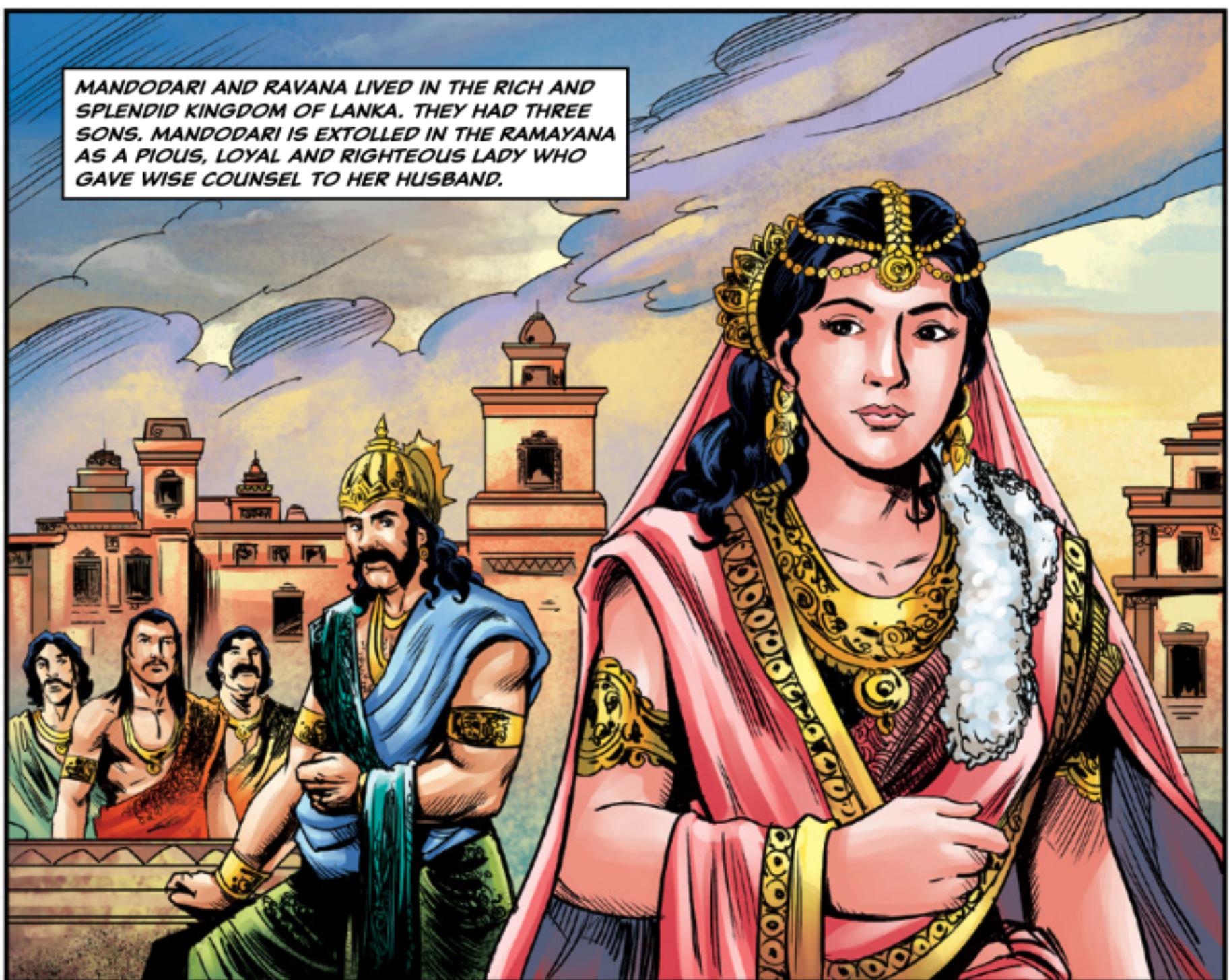
RAVANA AND MANDODARI WERE MARRIED WITH GREAT POMP AND CEREMONY.



THEY DEPARTED FOR LANKA IN THE CELESTIAL PUSHPAKA VIMANA.



MANDODARI AND RAVANA LIVED IN THE RICH AND SPLENDID KINGDOM OF LANKA. THEY HAD THREE SONS. MANDODARI IS EXTOLLED IN THE RAMAYANA AS A PIous, LOYAL AND RIGHTEOUS LADY WHO GAVE WISE COUNSEL TO HER HUSBAND.



# MANY MOUNTAINS

Mountains have always been the 'abode of the gods' and the source of sacred rivers. The Puranas mention many peaks, some mythical and some real.



## Mount Kailash

Ancient sages thought that a sacred mountain called Mount Meru existed at the centre of the world.

Later, it was believed that Mount Meru was the Kailash mountain (that exists today on the Tibetan plateau in China) where dwell Lord Shiva and Parvati. Parvati (meaning 'of the mountain') is the daughter of Himavat, king of the Himalayas.

## Brahmagiri

Legend has it that the sage, Gautama, committed a sin by accidentally injuring a cow that had strayed into his ashram. To repent, he performed a severe penance to Shiva atop the Brahmagiri mountain (in Nashik district in the Western Ghats). Taking pity on the distraught sage, Shiva released Ganga from his locks, who then fell to the earth on top of the mountain as the river Godavari.

## Mount Gandamandana

This Himalayan peak had fragrant, flowering trees and gardens on its slopes, where the gods celebrated festivals. They were entertained by apsaras and gandharvas, such as Tumburu, who sang here on full moon nights, to the delight of his divine audience.



## Govardhan

Once, Indra was angry at the people of Gokul and poured rain on them for seven days and seven nights. The wet and frightened folk turned to Krishna for help, who raised a nearby hill called Govardhan on his little finger, thus providing a safe and dry shelter for everyone. Indra realised his error in challenging Krishna, who was an avatar of Vishnu, and stopped the deluge.

## Vindhya

Long, long, ago the Vindhya range that lies across central India, grew jealous of the lofty Mount Meru, and stretched higher and higher till it obstructed the sun, causing great hardship to those in its tall shadow. Around this time, the sage, Agastya, was travelling south and requested the Vindhya to bend down to let him cross over. Out of reverence for the sage, the Vindhya complied and promised to stay that way till the sage returned. But as Agastya settled in the south, the Vindhya remained low forever.

## Chandragiri and Vindhya

These two hills in Shravanabelagola in Karnataka are sacred to the Jain religion. Atop Vindhya hill is an 18m tall giant statue of the Jain saint Gomateshwara or Bahubali, constructed in 981 CE. Every 12 years, it is ritually bathed in milk, ghee, sandalwood, saffron and sugarcane juice at the Mahamastakabhisheka festival.

The neighbouring hill of Chandragiri is named after the Mauryan Emperor, Chandragupta, who converted to Jainism and retired here to do penance in the 3rd century BCE.

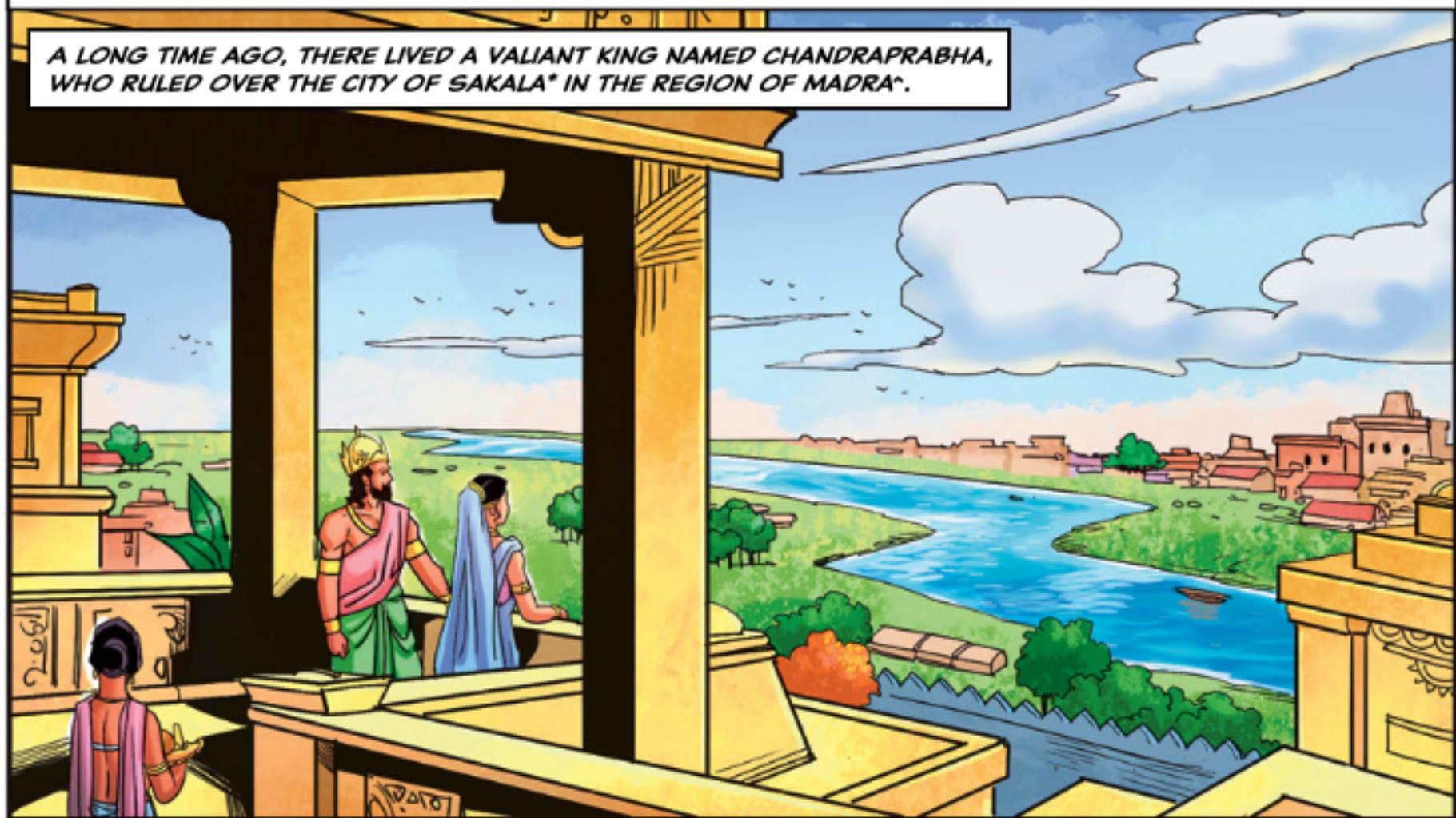
## Mandara

This is a mythical mountain that was used as a churning rod by the devas and asuras at the time of the 'sagarmanthana' or the churning of the ocean of milk, to extract 'amruta' or the elixir of immortality. Vishnu assumed the form of a turtle on the sea bed, and Mandara was fixed on his back. Shiva's serpent, Vasuki, was then securely tied around the mountain to serve as the churning rod, one end pulled by the asuras, and the other by the devas.

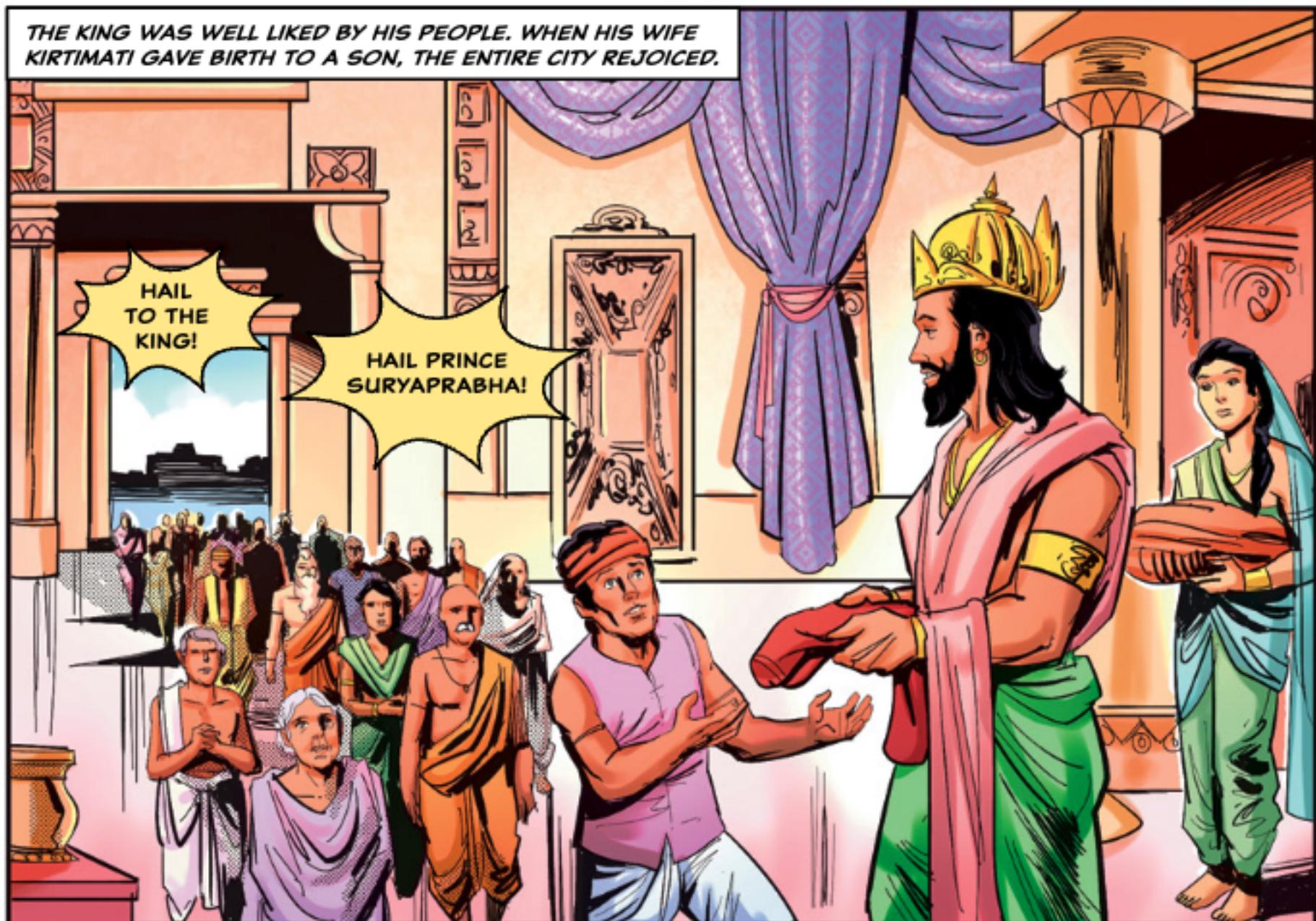
# SURYAPRABHA

VIDYADHARAS WERE SKILLED IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES. THEIR HELP WAS ALWAYS SOUGHT BY DEVAS AND ASURAS ALIKE. THEY LIVED IN THE HIMALAYAS AND OBEYED THEIR KING, WHO WAS APPOINTED FROM AMONG ABLE CANDIDATES. SOMETIMES, LIKE SURYAPRABHA, THE KING COULD BE MORTAL-BORN BUT ACQUIRE THE STATUS OF A VIDYADHARA.

A LONG TIME AGO, THERE LIVED A VALIANT KING NAMED CHANDRAPRABHA, WHO RULED OVER THE CITY OF SAKALA\* IN THE REGION OF MADRA<sup>^</sup>.



THE KING WAS WELL LIKED BY HIS PEOPLE. WHEN HIS WIFE KIRTIMATI GAVE BIRTH TO A SON, THE ENTIRE CITY REJOICED.



\*SIALKOT CITY IN THE PUNJAB REGION  
IN PRESENT-DAY PAKISTAN

<sup>^</sup>A REGION NEAR THE JHELUM  
RIVER IN PRESENT-DAY PUNJAB

A GREAT FUTURE WAS PREDICTED FOR THE ROYAL BABY.

THE PRINCE HAS MANY AUSPICIOUS MARKS ON HIS BODY.

HE WILL BE A GREAT RULER IN THE SKIES AND EXTOLLED IN ALL THREE LOKAS.

THE PREDICTION PUZZLED THE PARENTS.

WHAT DID THE RAJGURU MEAN BY 'RULER IN THE SKIES'?

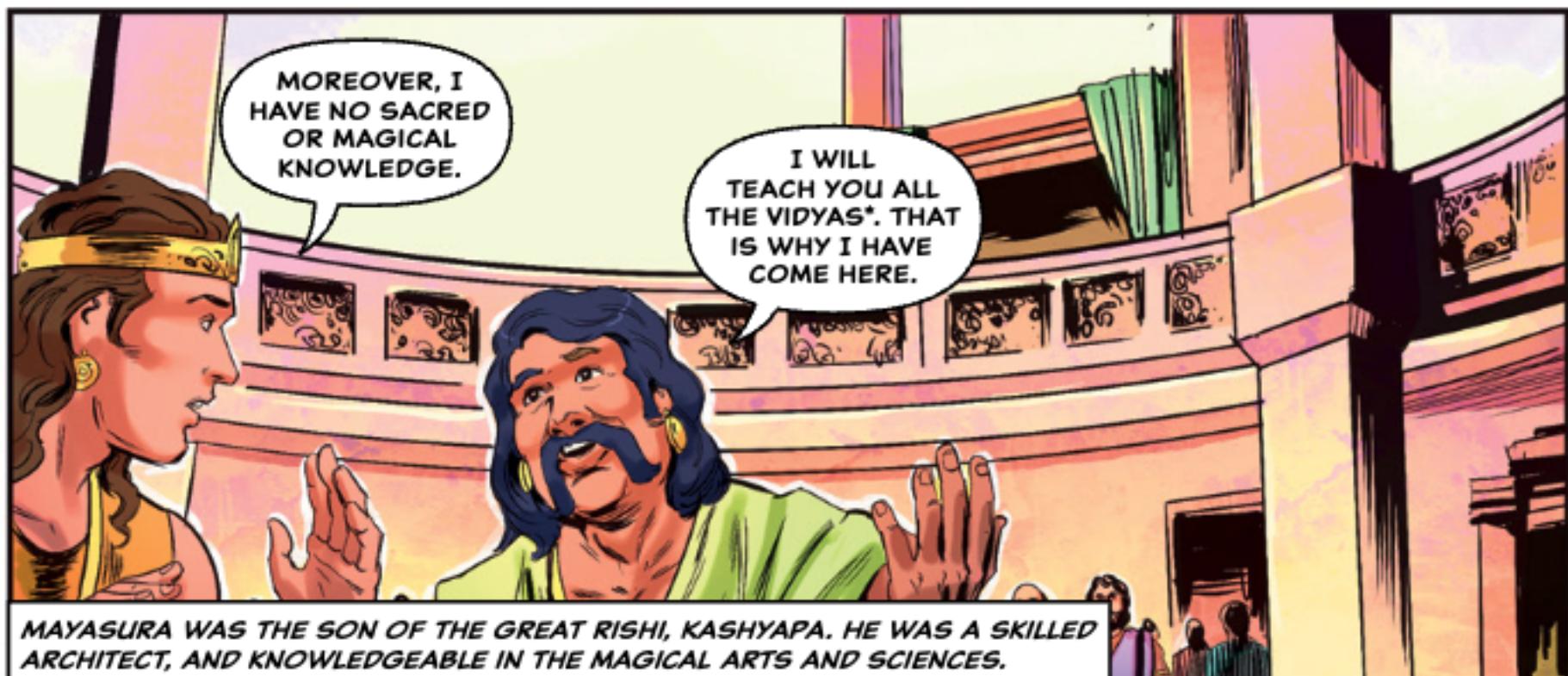
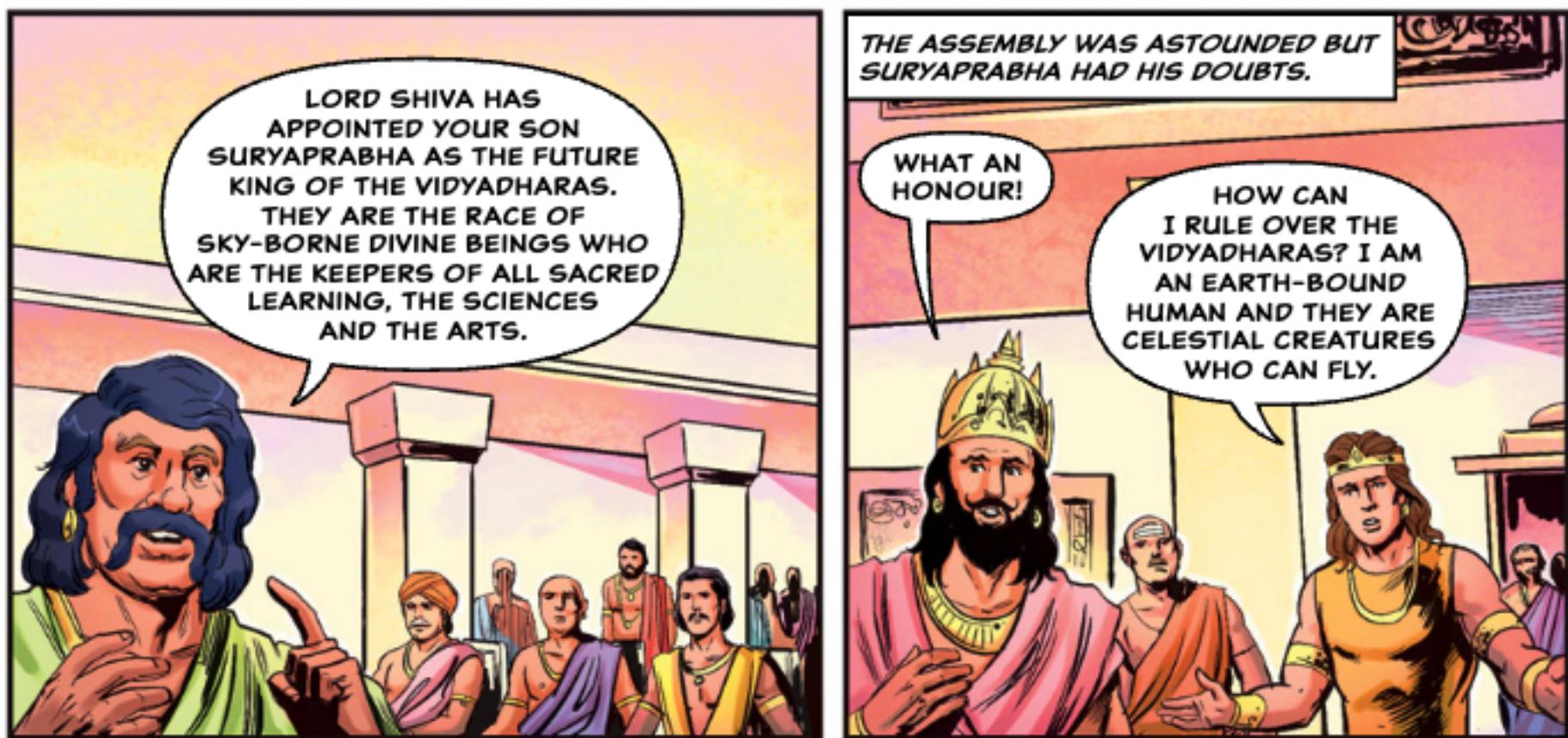
IT IS A MYSTIFYING PREDICTION AS WE ARE MORTAL AND CANNOT FLY.

SURYAPRABHA GREW INTO A HANDSOME LAD.

HE EXCELS IN HIS STUDIES TOO.

THE PRINCE IS A STRONG FIGHTER!

ONE DAY, THE LEARNED ASURA KING, MAYASURA, CAME TO SAKALA.



## SURYAPRABHA

MAYASURA EXPLAINED FURTHER.

ANOTHER ABLE PRINCE, SRUTASARMAN, HAS LAID CLAIM TO RULE THE VIDYADHARAS. HE IS SUPPORTED BY INDRA AND HIS DEVAS. I WILL EQUIP YOU WITH THE POWER NEEDED TO MEET HIS CHALLENGE.

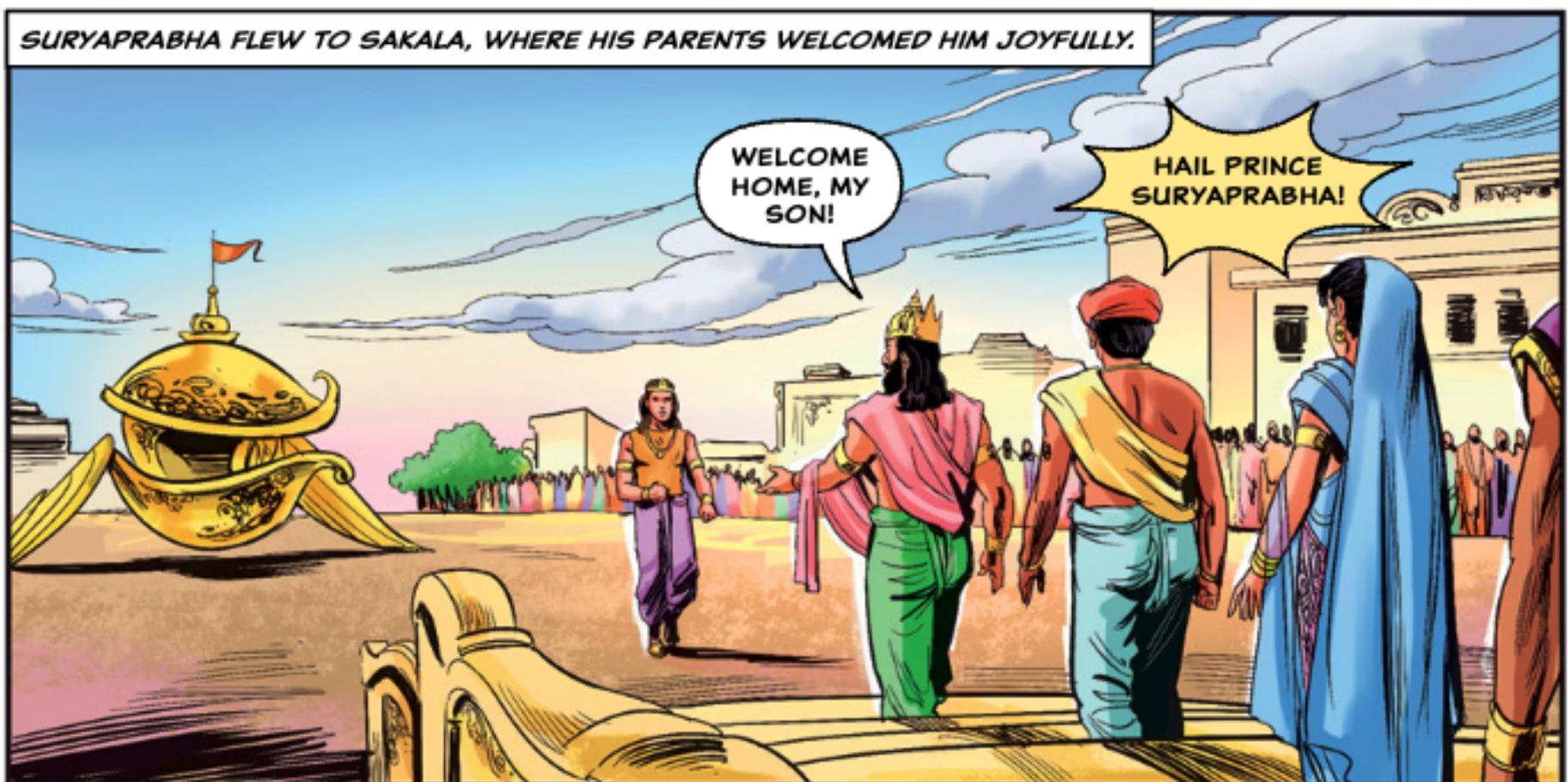
MAYASURA TOOK SURYAPRABHA TO A REMOTE CAVE, WHERE HE WAS TAUGHT ALL THE SECRET KNOWLEDGE OF THE VIDYADHARAS.

IN A VERY SHORT TIME —

RETURN TO YOUR KINGDOM IN THIS MAGICAL FLYING CHARIOT. GO AND RAISE AN ARMY FOR THE FIGHT WITH SRUTASARMAN.

SURYAPRABHA, YOU ARE NOW PROFICIENT IN ALL THE VIDYAS AND HAVE GREAT SUPERNATURAL POWERS.

SURYAPRABHA FLEW TO SAKALA, WHERE HIS PARENTS WELCOMED HIM JOYFULLY.



FATHER, I WILL JOURNEY TO ALL THE NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS TO SEEK SUPPORT IN THE COMING WAR WITH SRUTASARMAN. PRAHASTA WILL ACCOMPANY ME.

YES, HE WILL GUIDE YOU WELL.

THE RULERS OF THE NEIGHBOURING REALMS AGREED TO HELP ON THE CONDITION THAT SURYAPRABHA MARRY THEIR DAUGHTERS.

WE WILL AID YOU IN YOUR BATTLE TO WIN THE THRONE OF THE VIDYADHARAS. BUT YOU MUST SEAL OUR FRIENDSHIP WITH A MARRIAGE ALLIANCE.

AGREED.



PRAHASTA WAS SURYAPRABHA'S CHILDHOOD COMPANION, NOW HIS ABLE ADVISOR.



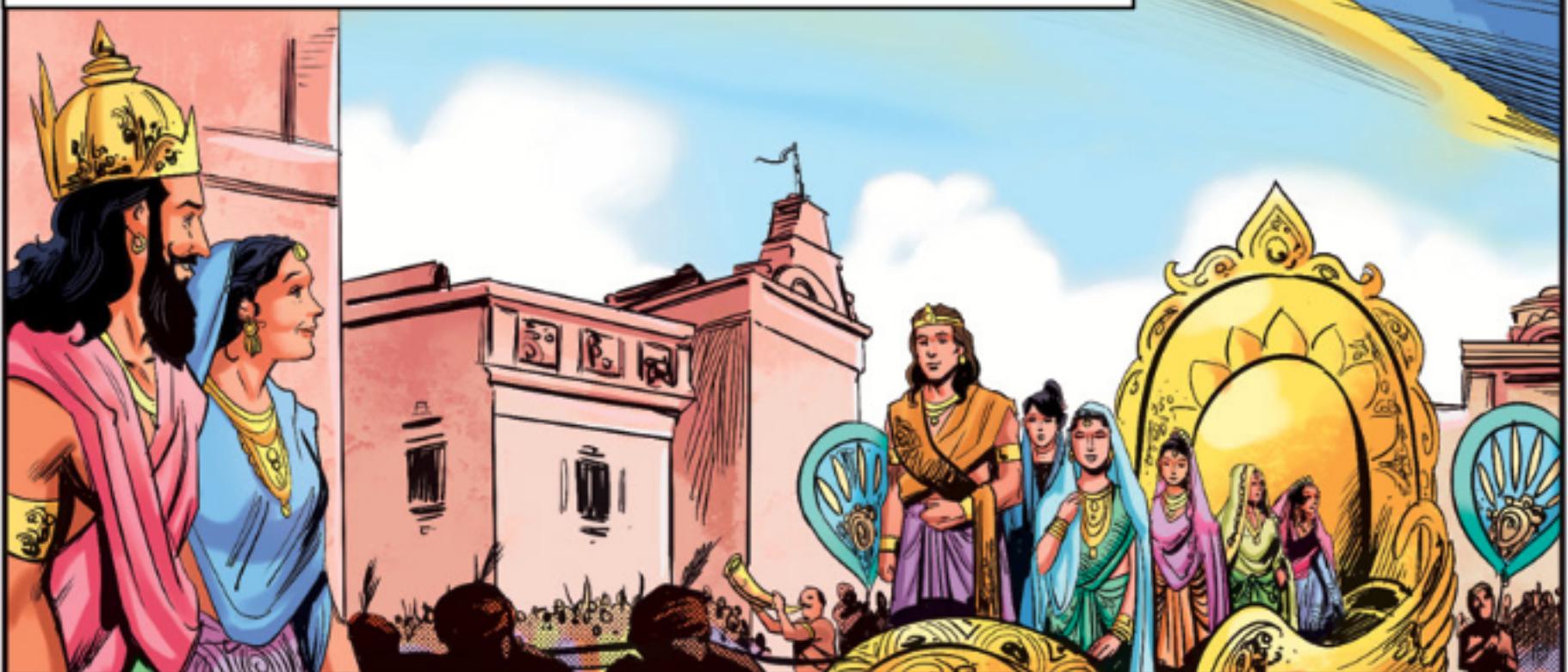
IN THIS WAY, SURYAPRABHA WED MANY PRINCESSES, EACH OF WHOM BROUGHT WEALTH AND AN ARMY.



AFTER A FEW MONTHS —



SAKALA CELEBRATED THE RETURN OF THEIR PRINCE AND HIS MANY ROYAL WIVES.



MAYASURA ARRIVED SHORTLY.

THE TIME  
HAS COME FOR  
SURYAPRABHA TO  
BE ANOINTED AS  
THE KING OF THE  
VIDYADHARAS.

SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A STERN VOICE.

WAIT!

IT WAS SAGE NARADA.

INDRA DOES NOT  
ACCEPT SURYAPRABHA'S  
APPOINTMENT AS KING OF  
THE VIDYADHARAS. HE HAS  
DECLARED THAT THE RIGHTFUL  
KING IS SRUTASARMAN.

YOU SPEAK LIKE A FOOL,  
NARADA. WHEN THE GREAT LORD  
SHIVA HAS CHOSEN SURYAPRABHA,  
HOW CAN INDRA CONTRADICT HIM?  
BESIDES, SURYAPRABHA HAS  
ACQUIRED ALL THE SUPERNATURAL  
POWERS OF THE VIDYADHARA. HE  
IS NOT A MORTAL ANYMORE.

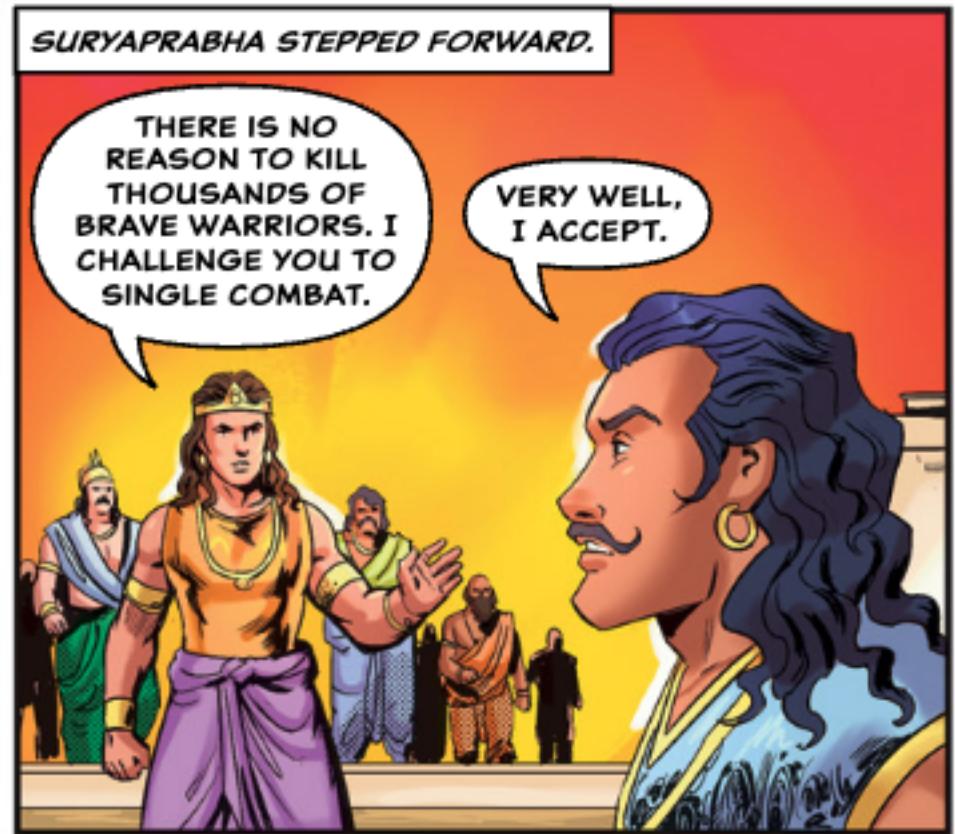
SURYAPRABHA

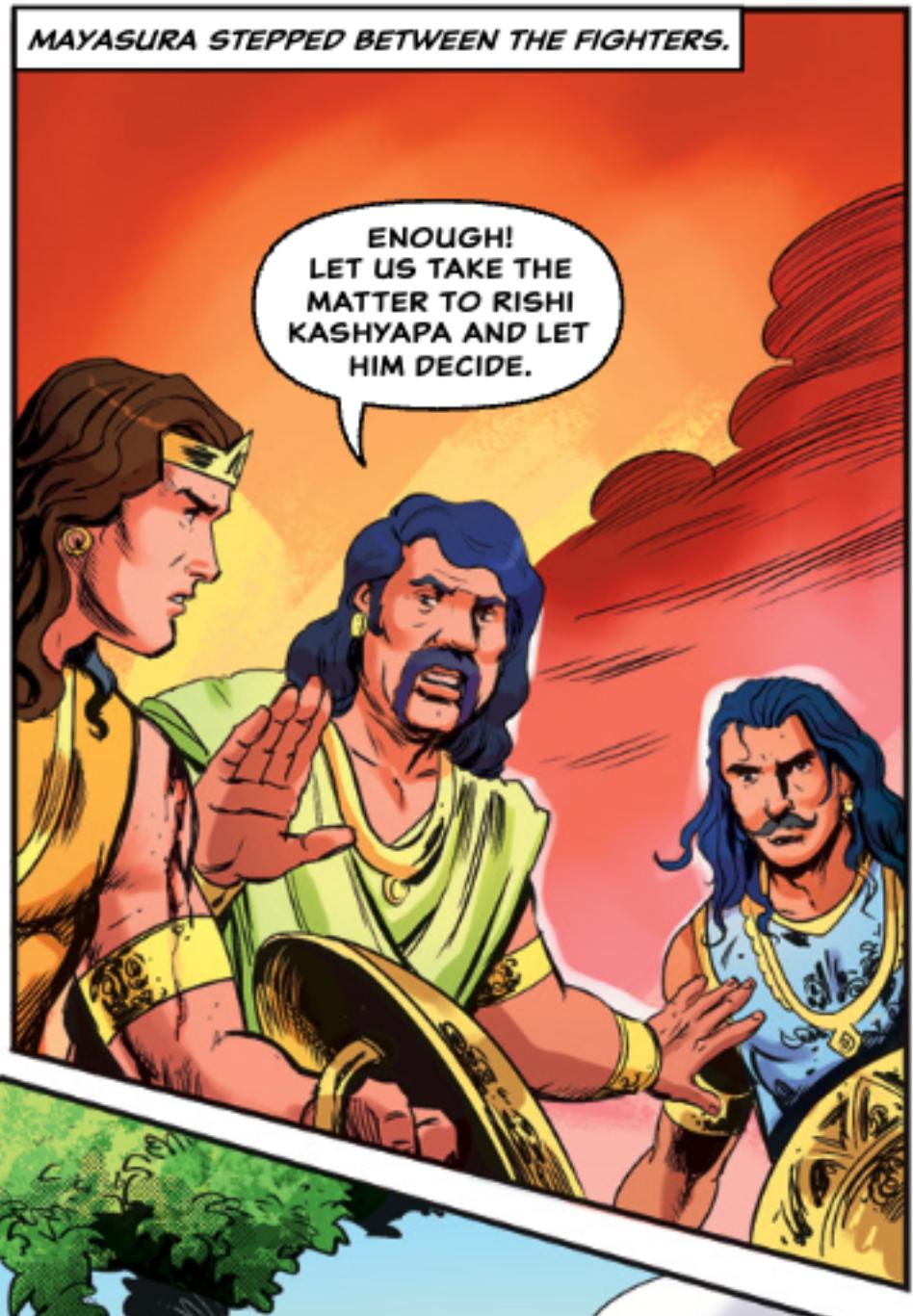
JUST THEN, THE SKY TURNED RED AND LIGHTNING FORKED IN THE SKY. A GREAT WIND BEGAN TO BLOW.

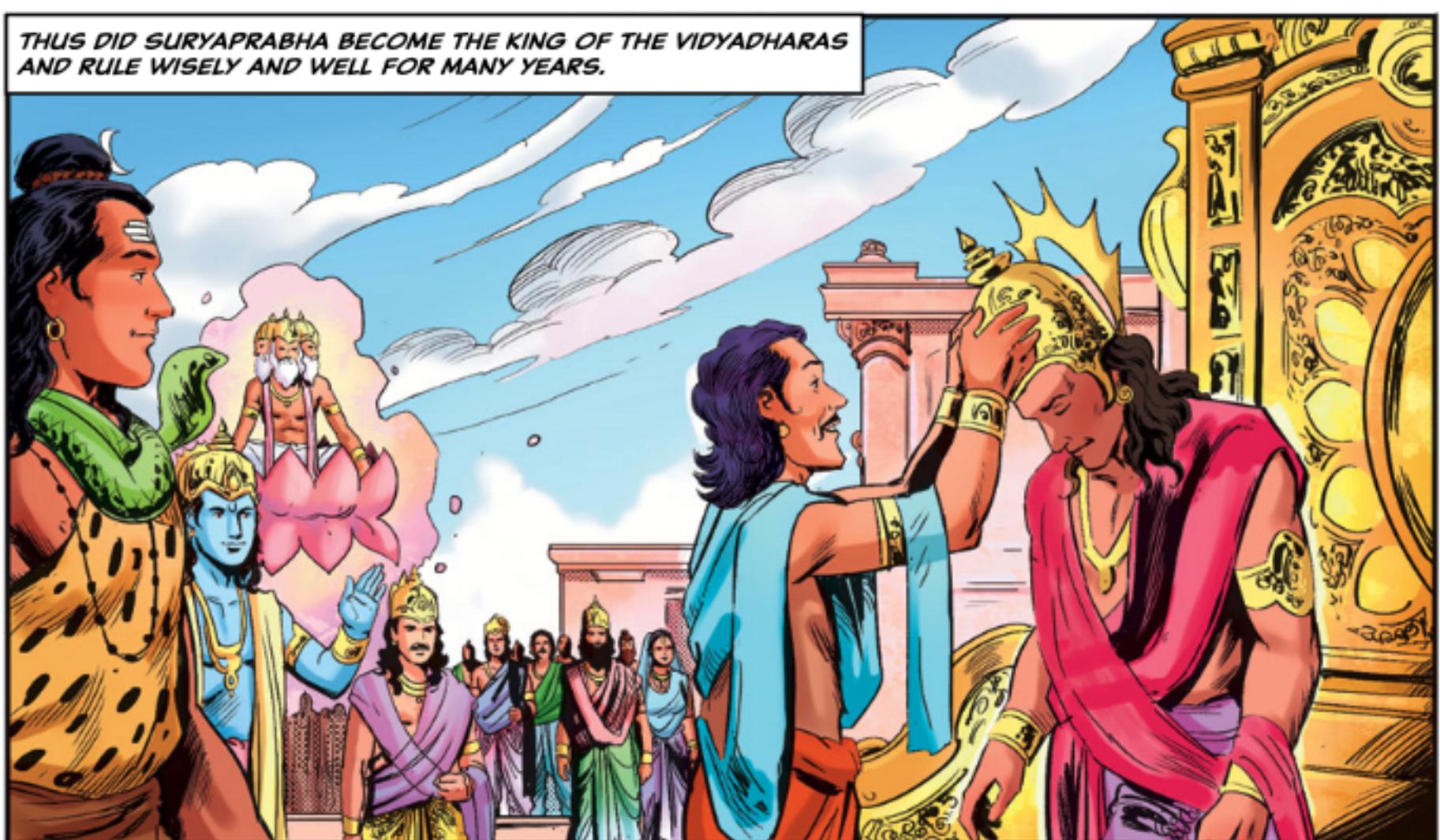
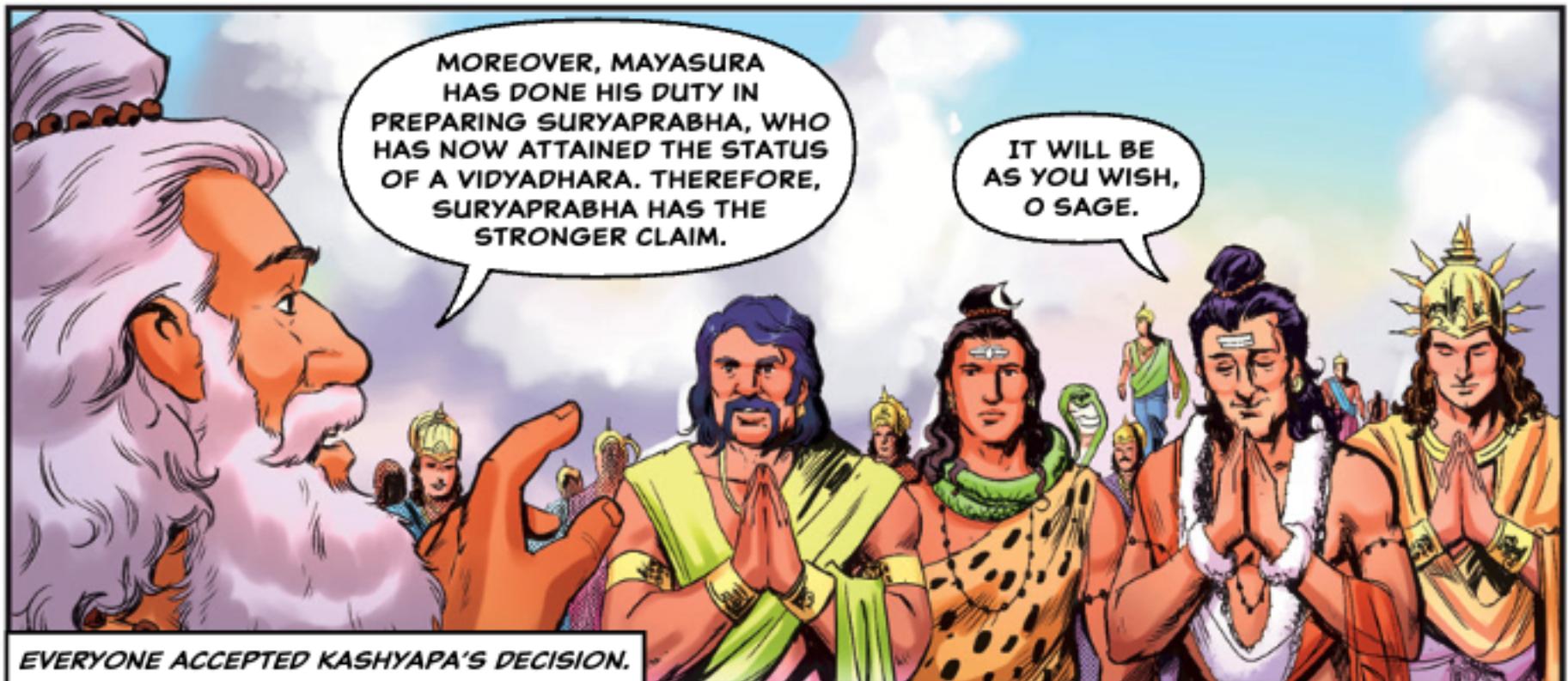
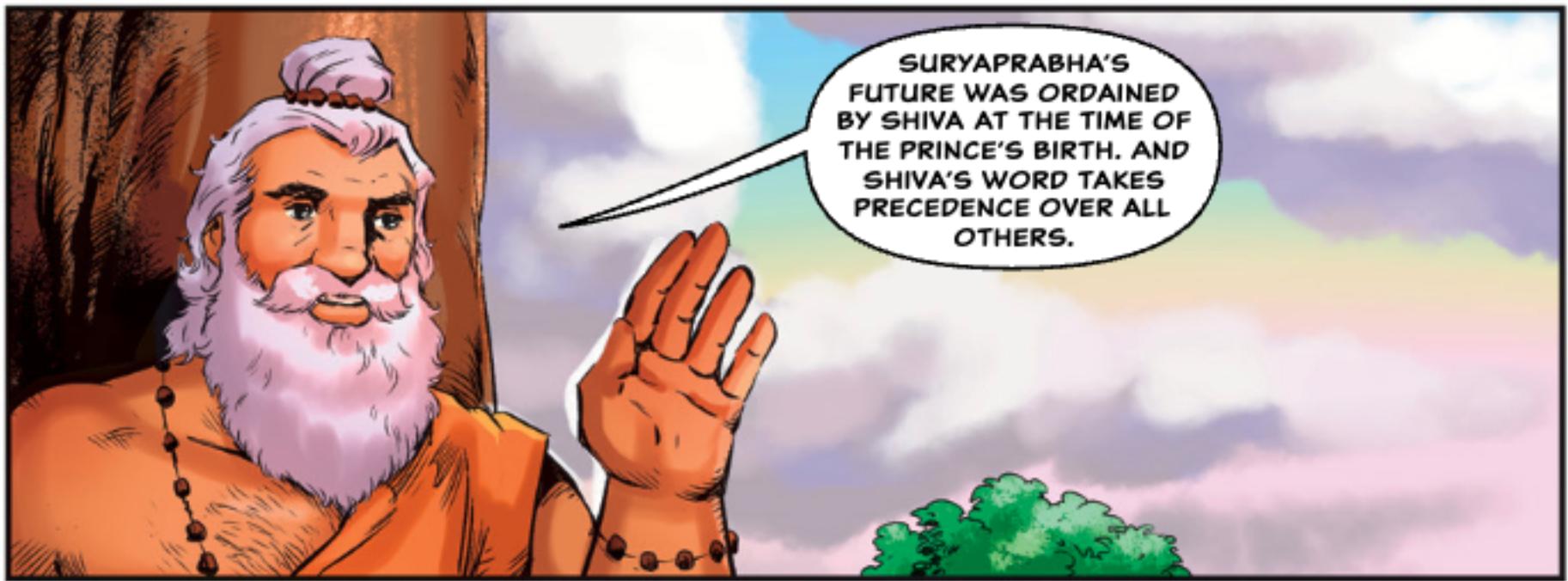


OUT OF THE BILLOWING RED CLOUDS EMERGED A GREAT ARMY OF VIDYADHARAS LED BY A TALL, HANDSOME YOUTH.



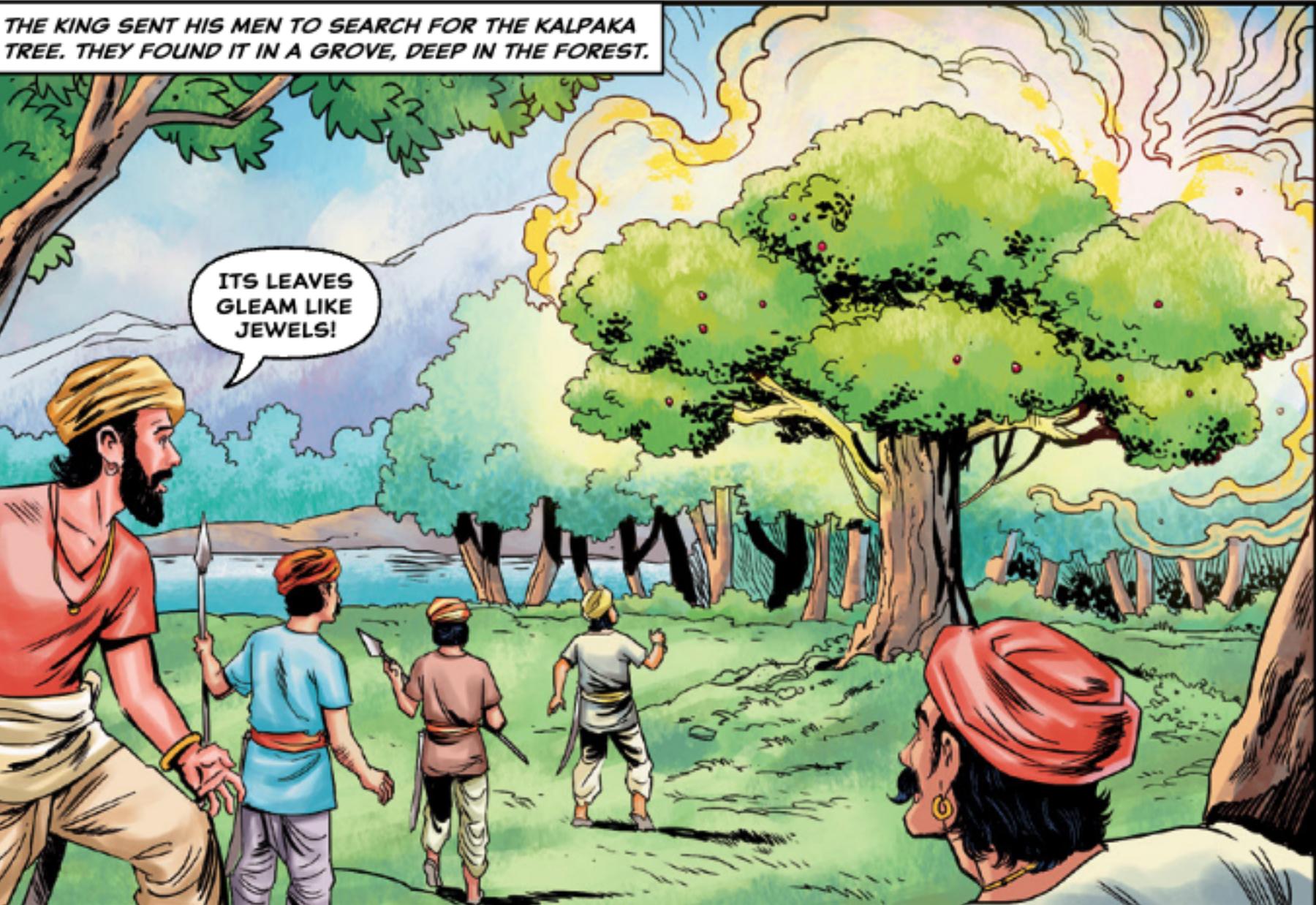
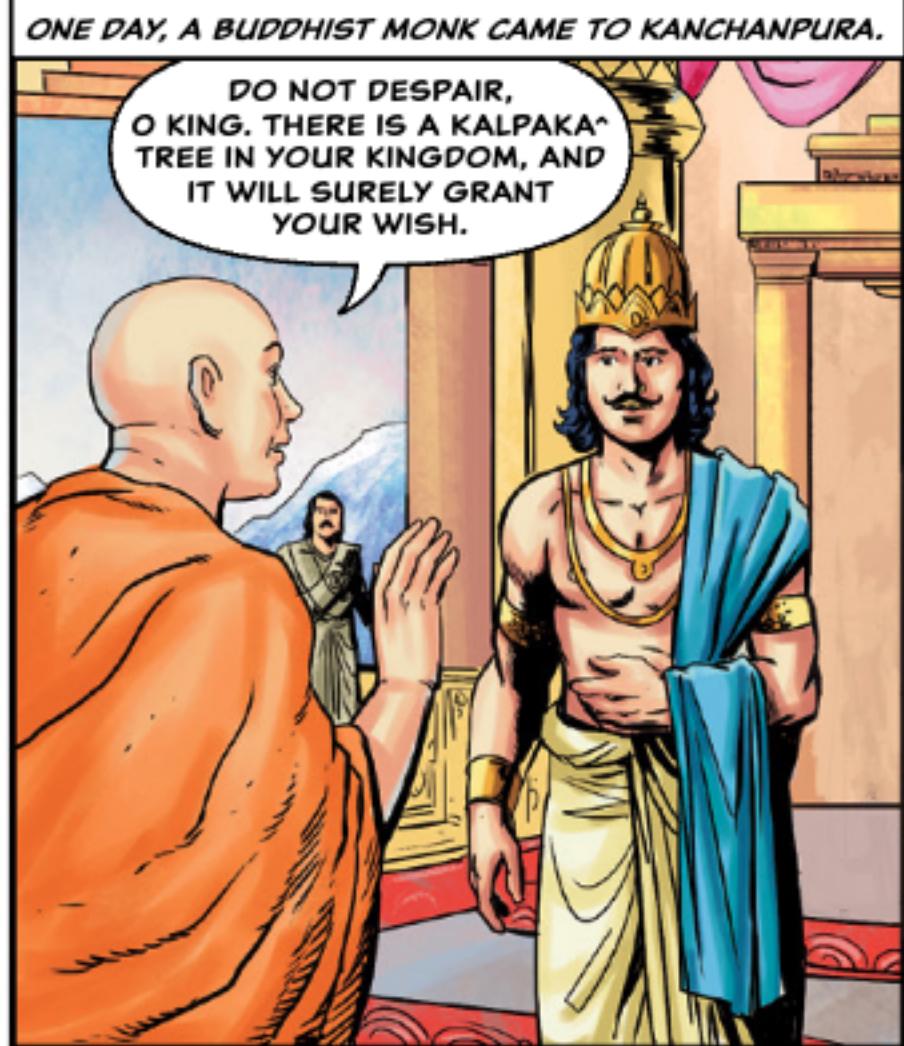
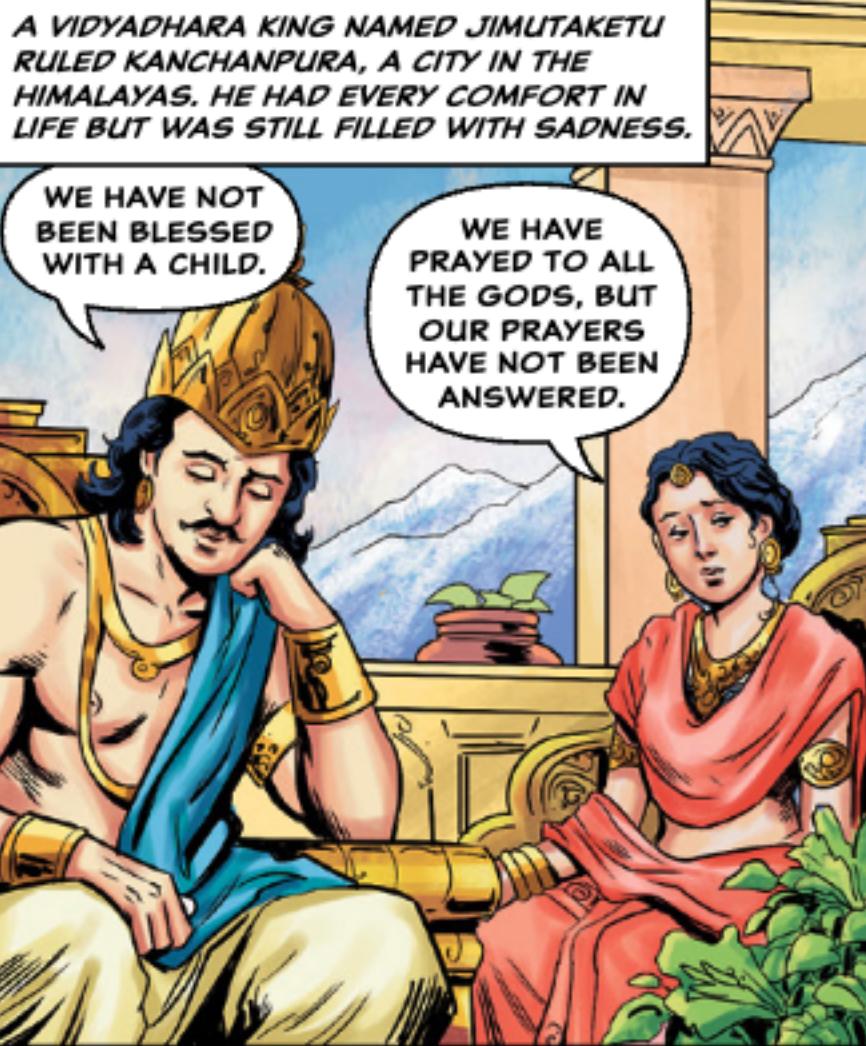






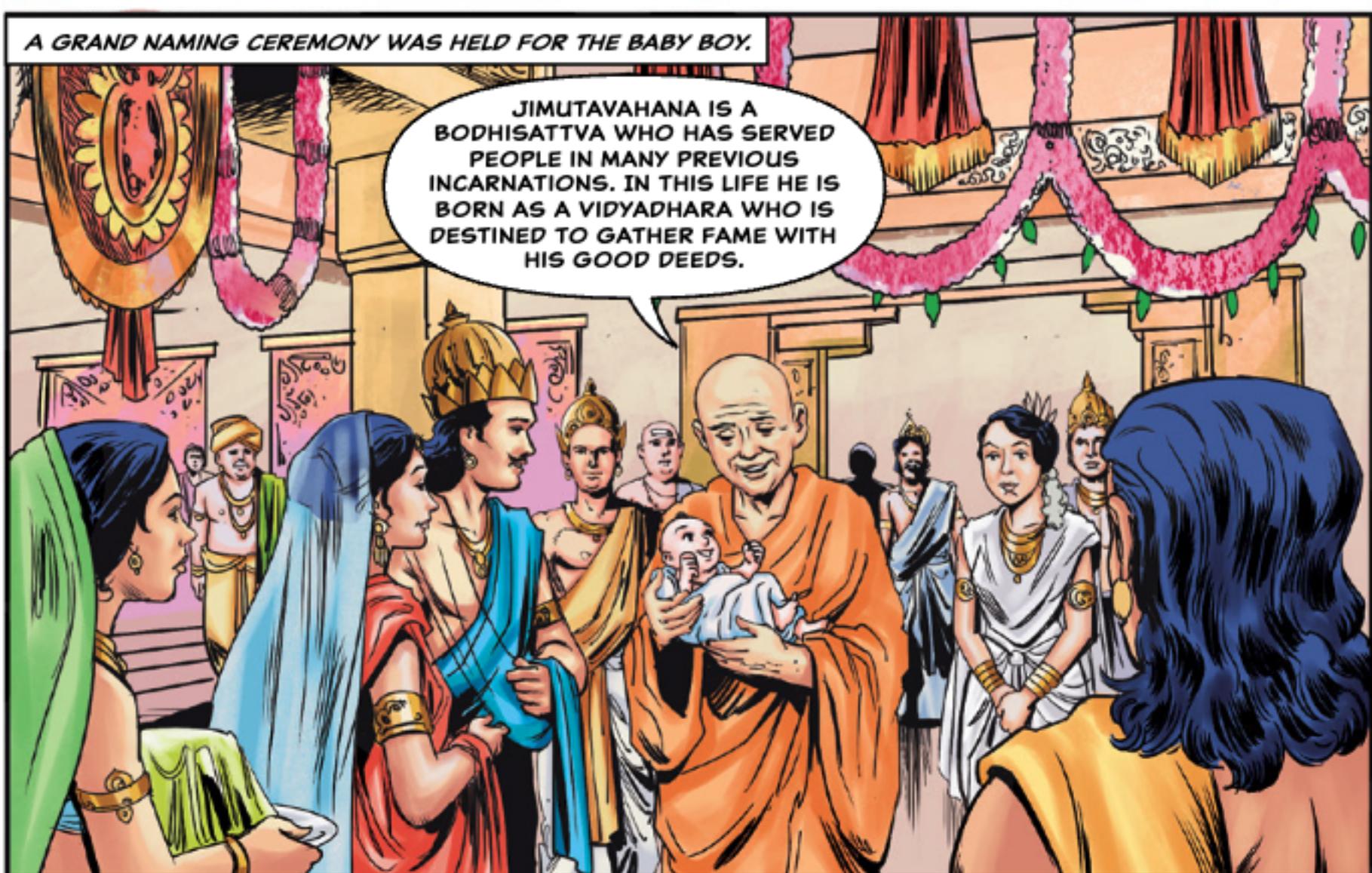
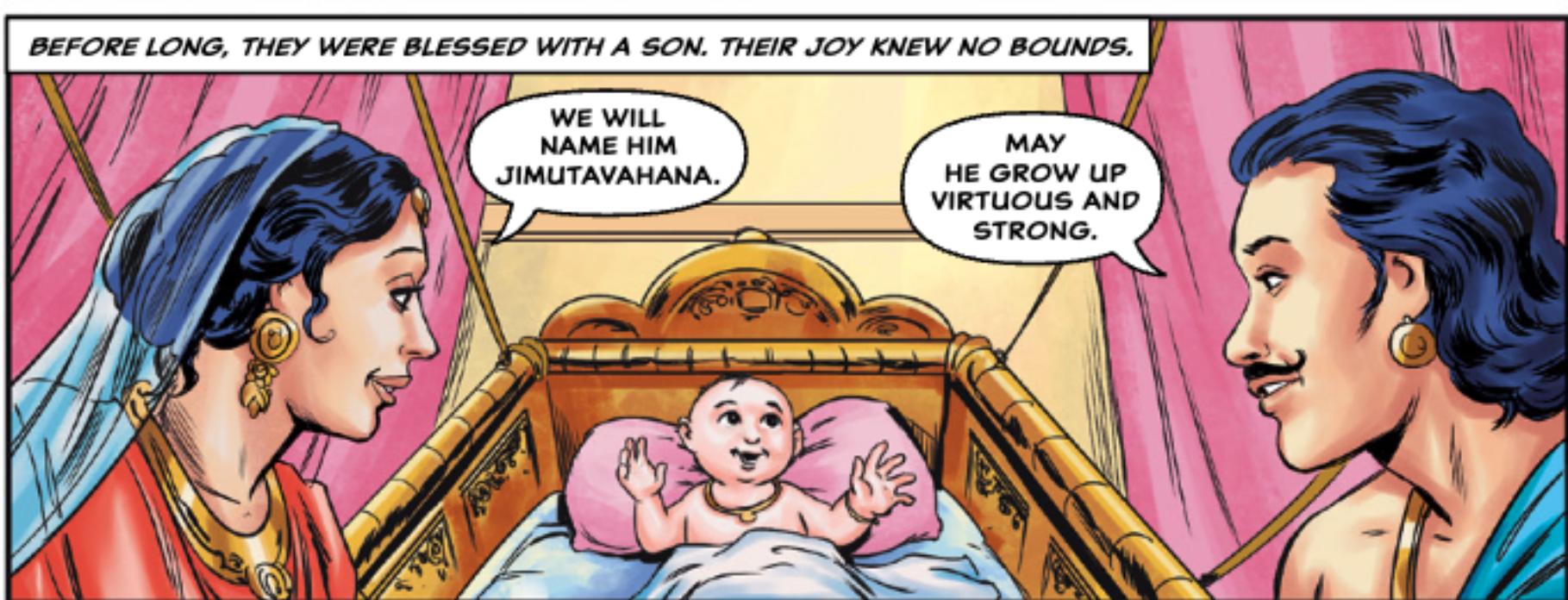
# JIMUTAVAHANA

BUDDHIST MYTHOLOGY HAS STORIES OF VIDYADHARAS, WHO WERE OFTEN BODHISATTVAS\*, BORN TO HELP OTHERS. HERE IS THE TALE OF JIMUTAVAHANA, A PRINCE OF EXTRAORDINARY KINDNESS.



\*ENLIGHTENED BEINGS WHO CHOSE TO HELP OTHERS AND WERE BUDDHA'S PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS

<sup>^</sup>WISH-FULFILLING TREE



JIMUTAKETU BUILT A SHRINE AROUND THE KALPAKA. THE TREE CONTINUED TO SHOWER ITS BLESSINGS ON THE KINGDOM.



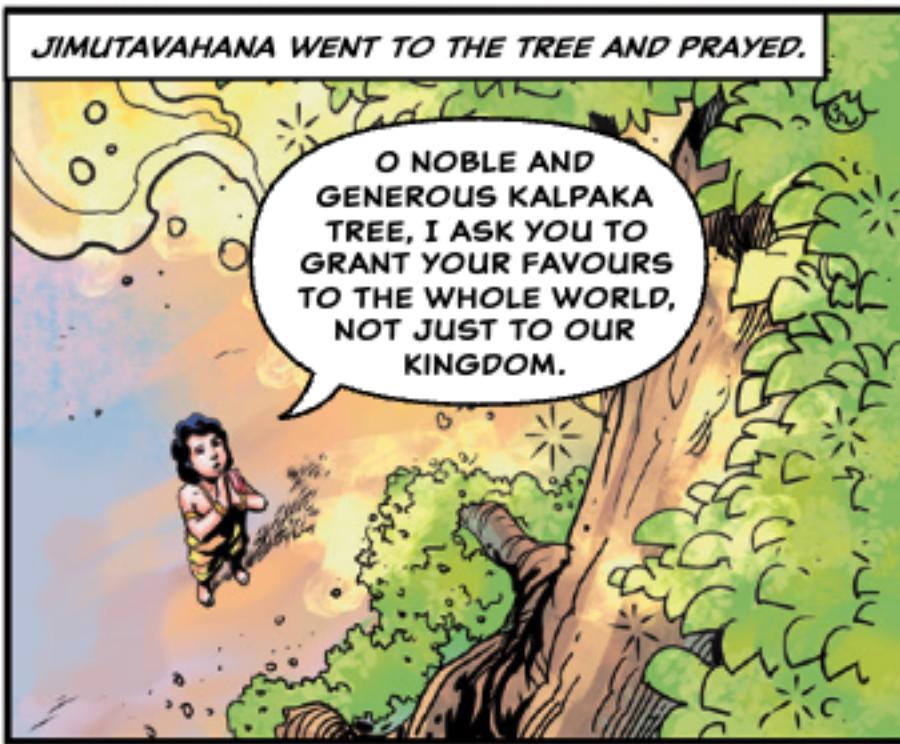
JIMUTAVAHANA GREW TO BE AN INTELLIGENT AND SENSITIVE BOY. ONE DAY —

FATHER, SUCH A WONDROUS TREE SHOULD BELONG TO THE WHOLE WORLD SO THAT EVERYONE MAY BENEFIT FROM IT.



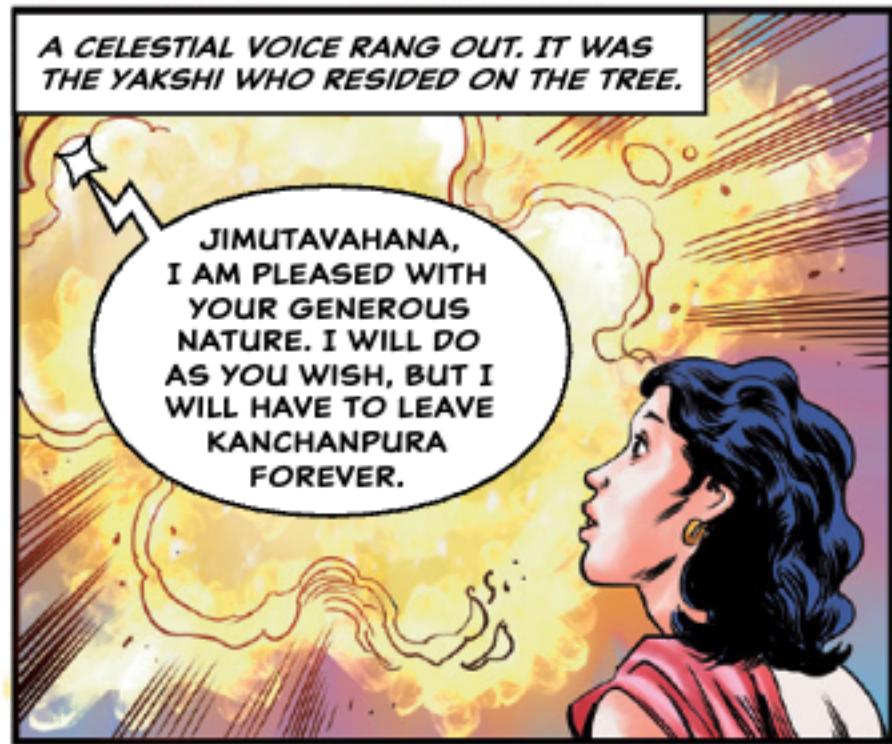
JIMUTAVAHANA WENT TO THE TREE AND PRAYED.

O NOBLE AND GENEROUS KALPAKA TREE, I ASK YOU TO GRANT YOUR FAVOURS TO THE WHOLE WORLD, NOT JUST TO OUR KINGDOM.

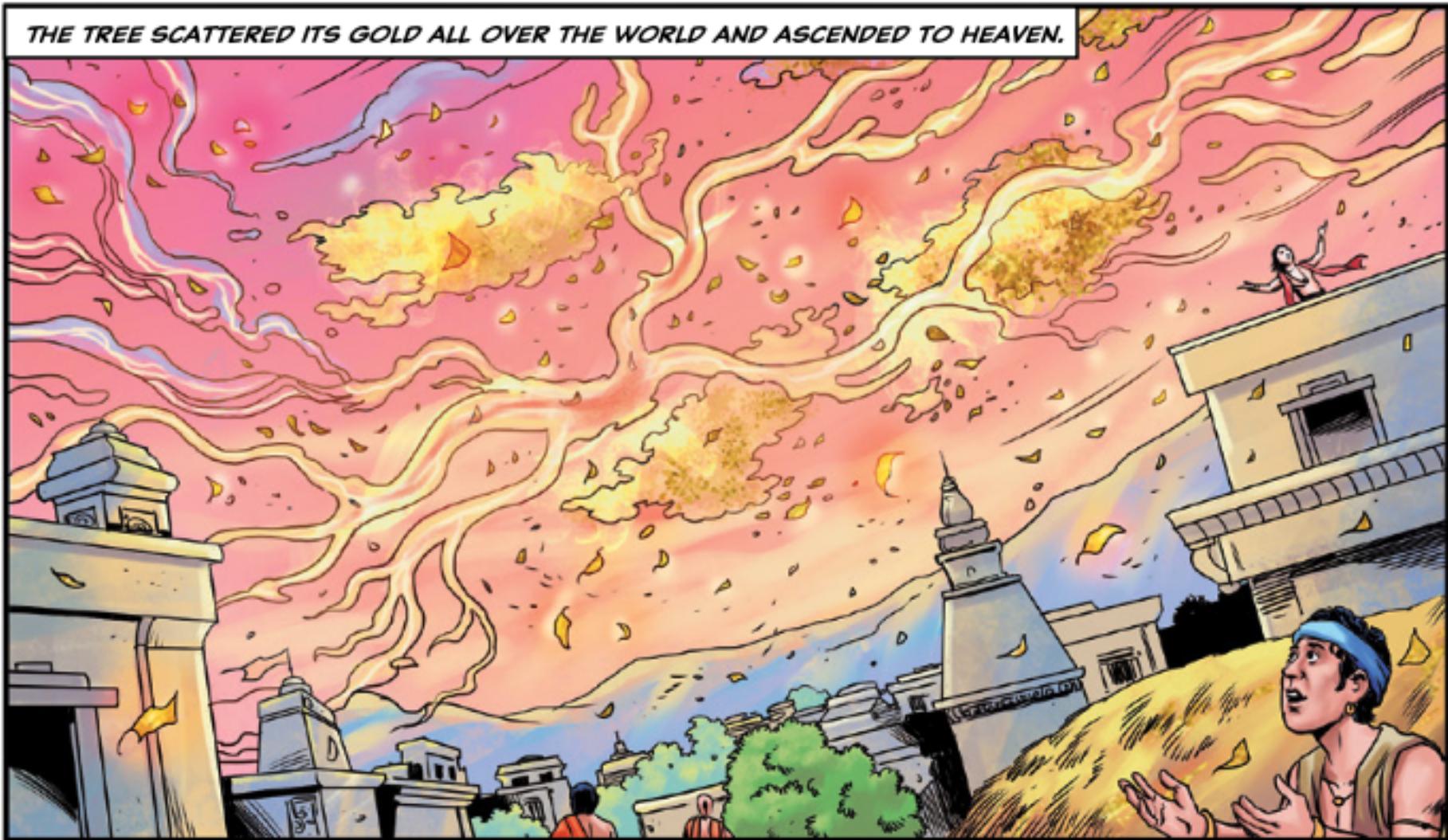


A CELESTIAL VOICE RANG OUT. IT WAS THE YAKSHI WHO RESIDED ON THE TREE.

JIMUTAVAHANA, I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR GENEROUS NATURE. I WILL DO AS YOU WISH, BUT I WILL HAVE TO LEAVE KANCHANPURA FOREVER.



THE TREE SCATTERED ITS GOLD ALL OVER THE WORLD AND ASCENDED TO HEAVEN.



PEOPLE PRAISED JIMUTAVAHANA FOR HIS GENEROSITY AND HIS FAME SPREAD FAR AND WIDE.

WE ARE ALL RICH, THANKS TO JIMUTAVAHANA.

HE IS A GENEROUS AND KIND PERSON.

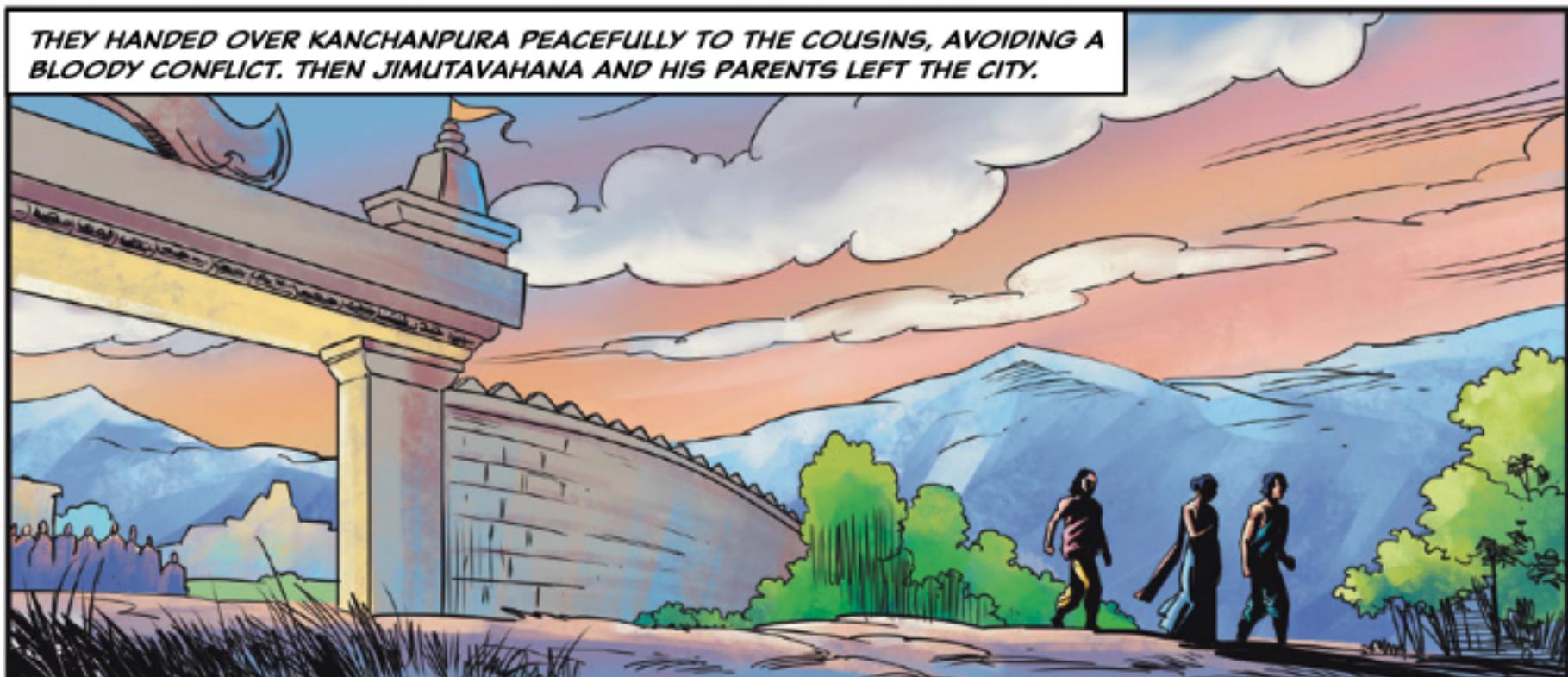
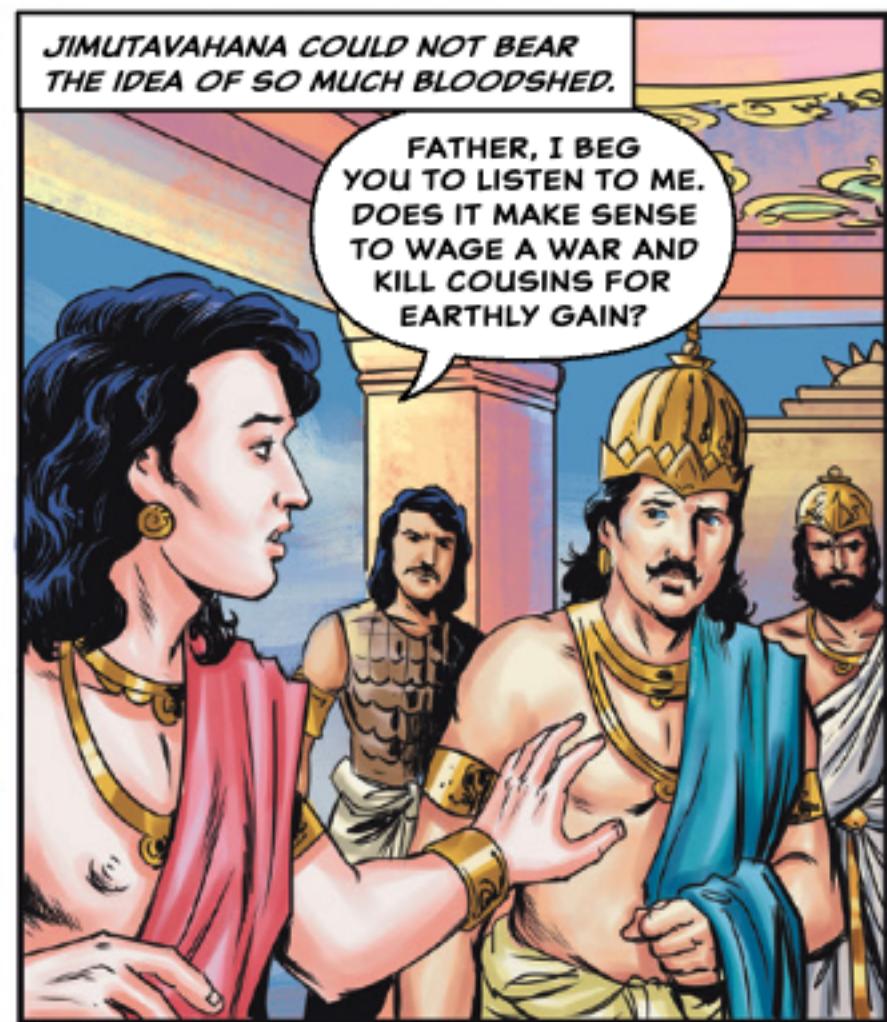
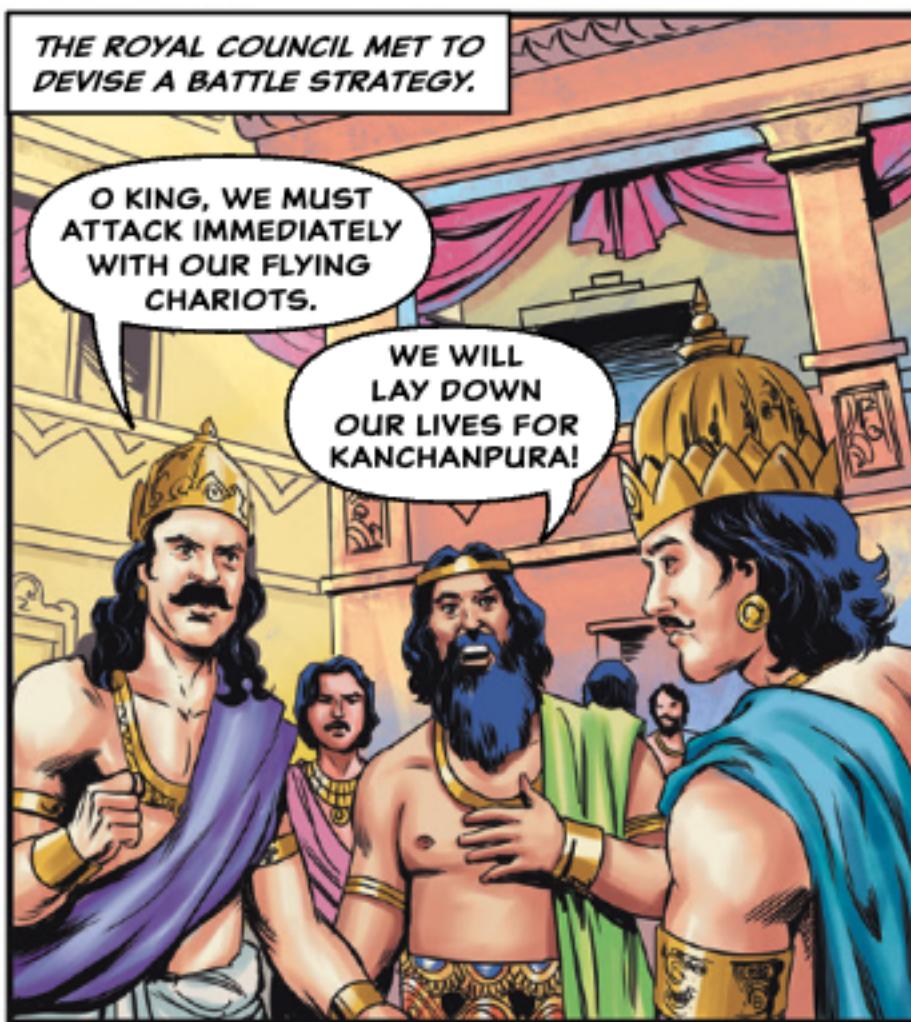
HE DESERVES TO BE KING OF ALL THE VIDYADHARAS.

THIS MADE JIMUTAVAHANA'S COUSINS JEALOUS.

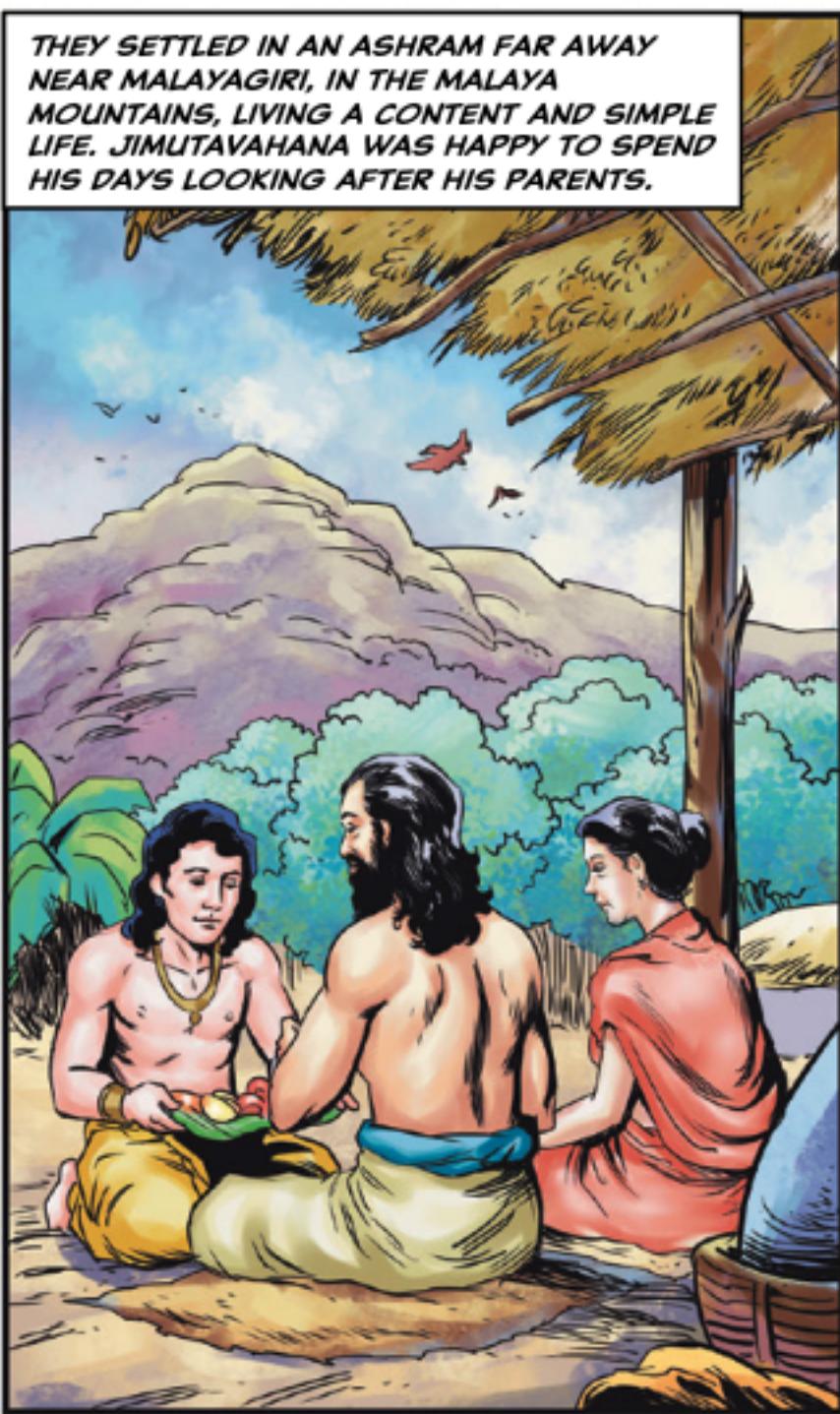
THIS IS THE TIME TO ATTACK KANCHANPURA AND TAKE IT.

THE KALPAKA TREE IS NOT THERE TO PROTECT THEM.

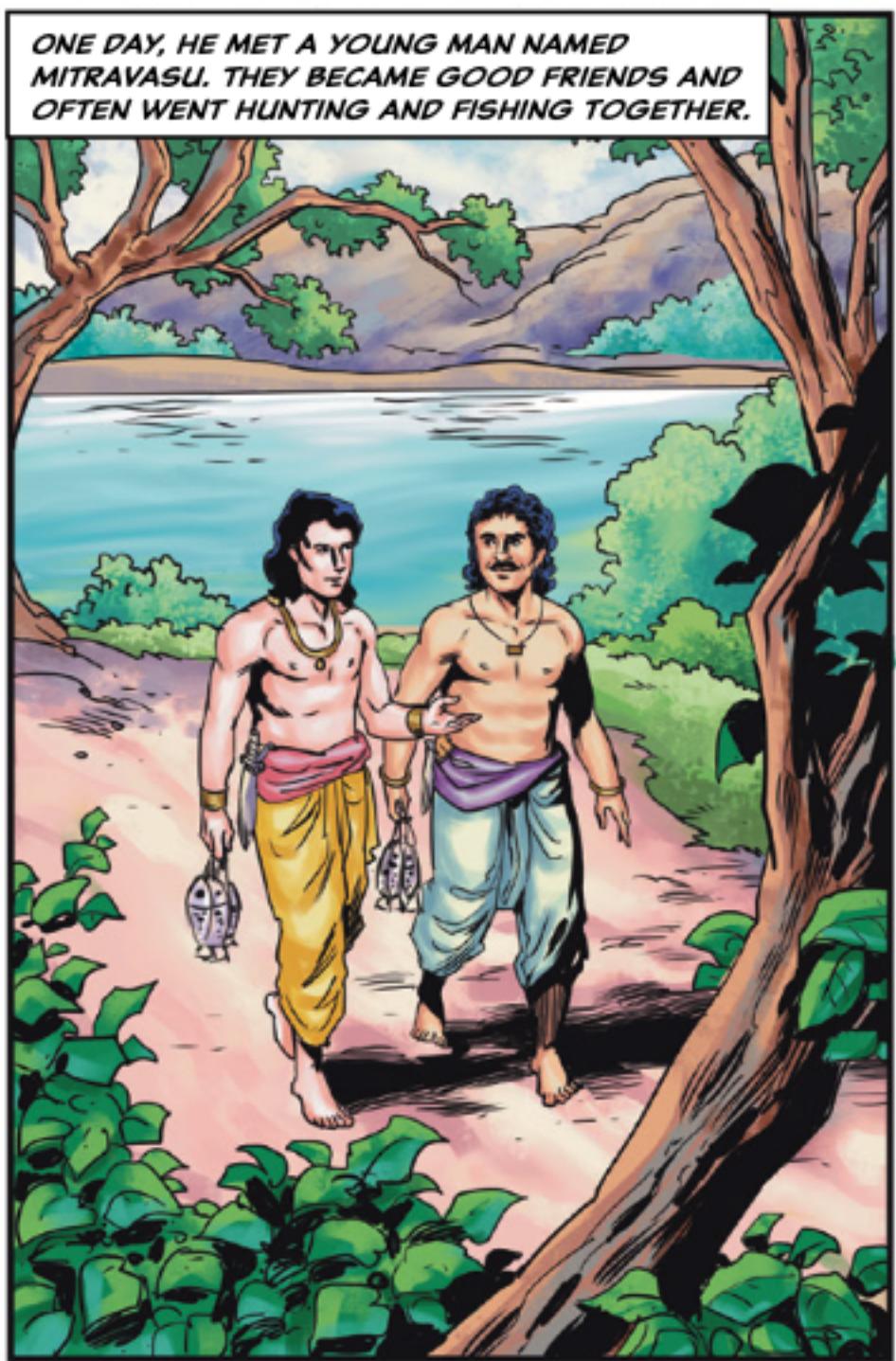
THEY GATHERED A VAST ARMY OF VIDYADHARAS AND REACHED KANCHANPURA.



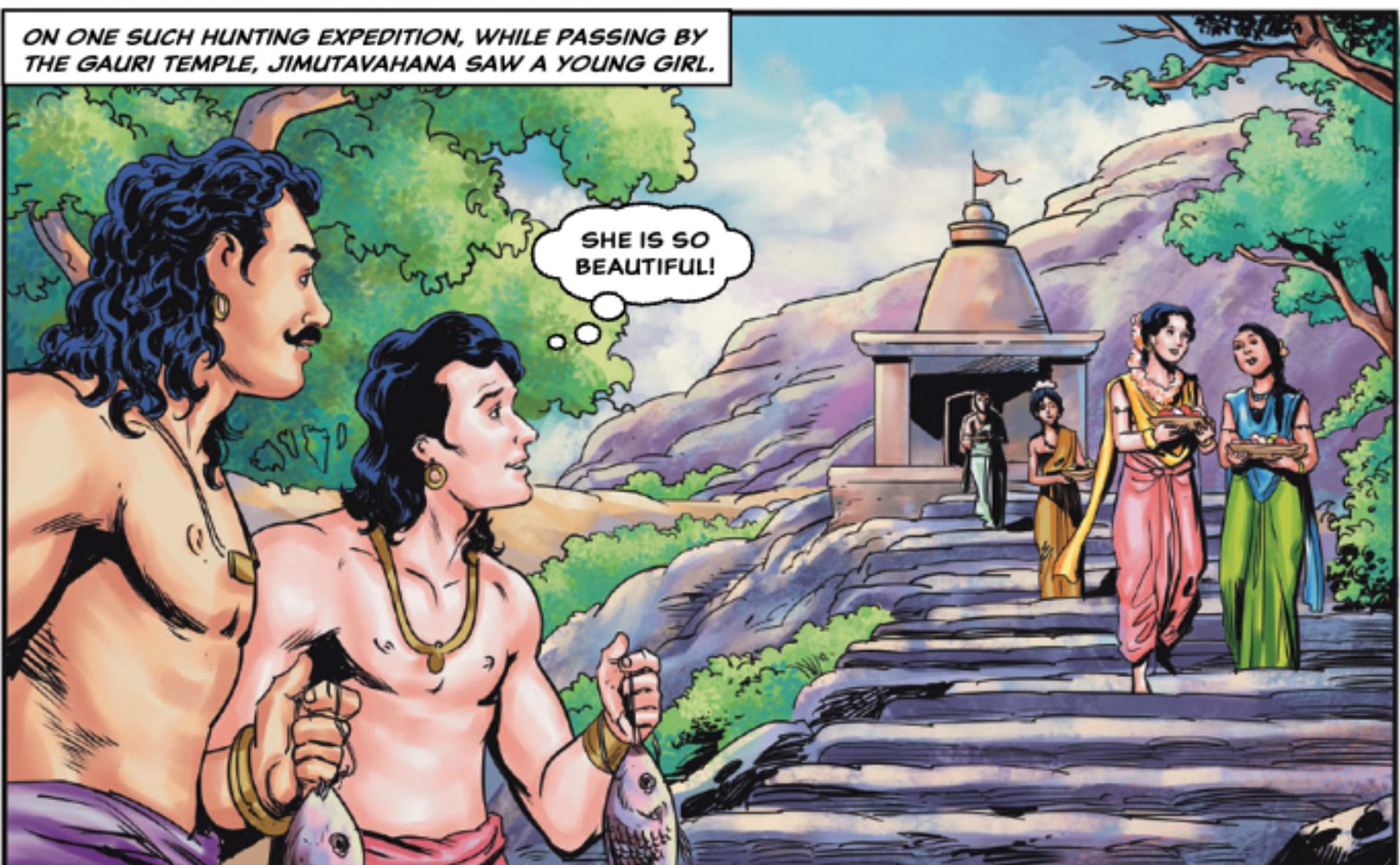
THEY SETTLED IN AN ASHRAM FAR AWAY NEAR MALAYAGIRI, IN THE MALAYA MOUNTAINS, LIVING A CONTENT AND SIMPLE LIFE. JIMUTAVAHANA WAS HAPPY TO SPEND HIS DAYS LOOKING AFTER HIS PARENTS.



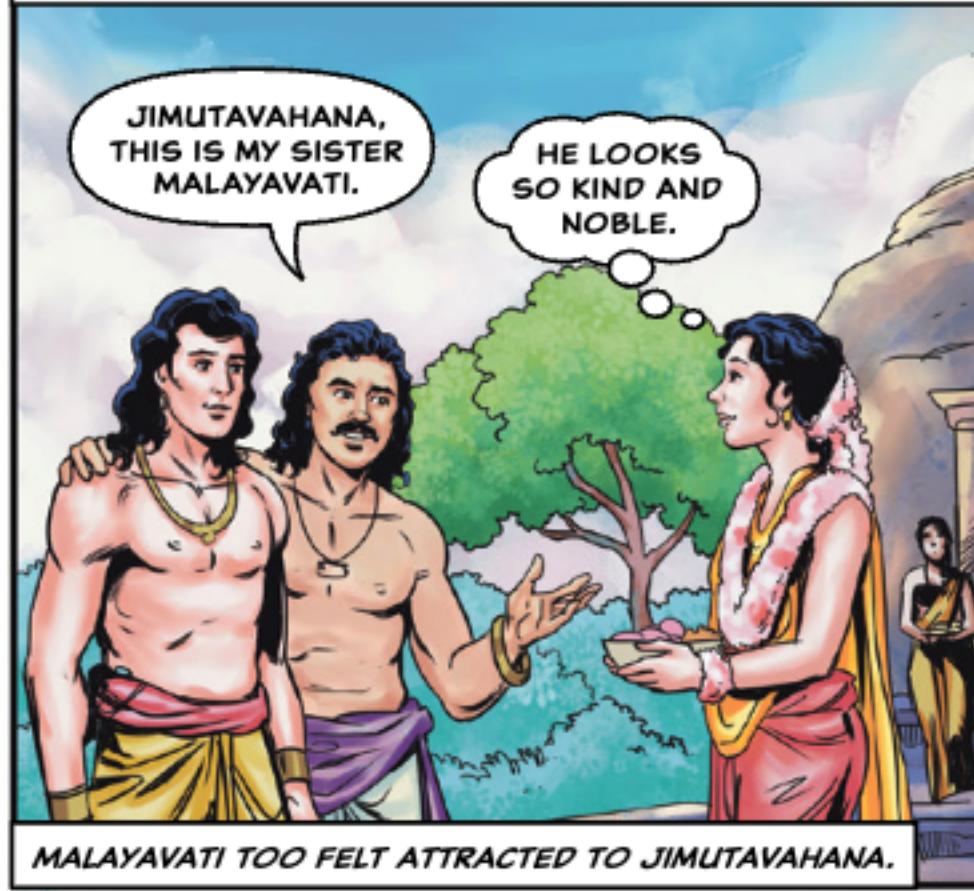
ONE DAY, HE MET A YOUNG MAN NAMED MITRAVASU. THEY BECAME GOOD FRIENDS AND OFTEN WENT HUNTING AND FISHING TOGETHER.



ON ONE SUCH HUNTING EXPEDITION, WHILE PASSING BY THE GAURI TEMPLE, JIMUTAVAHANA SAW A YOUNG GIRL.



TO HIS AMAZEMENT, MITRAVASU CALLED OUT TO THE GIRL.



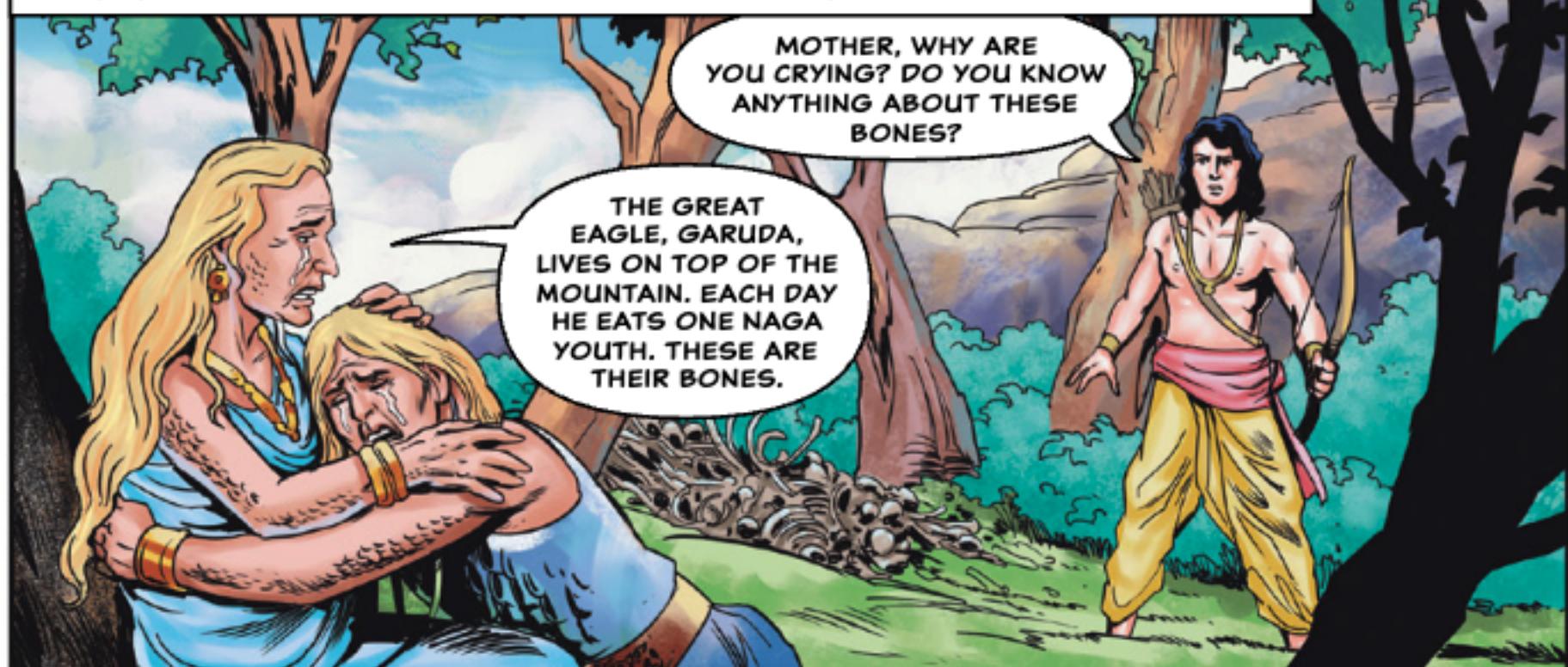
THEY WERE SOON MARRIED WITH THE BLESSINGS OF THEIR PARENTS.



THE DAYS PASSED PEACEFULLY. ONE DAY, WHILE OUT HUNTING IN THE FORESTS AT THE BASE OF MALAYAGIRI —



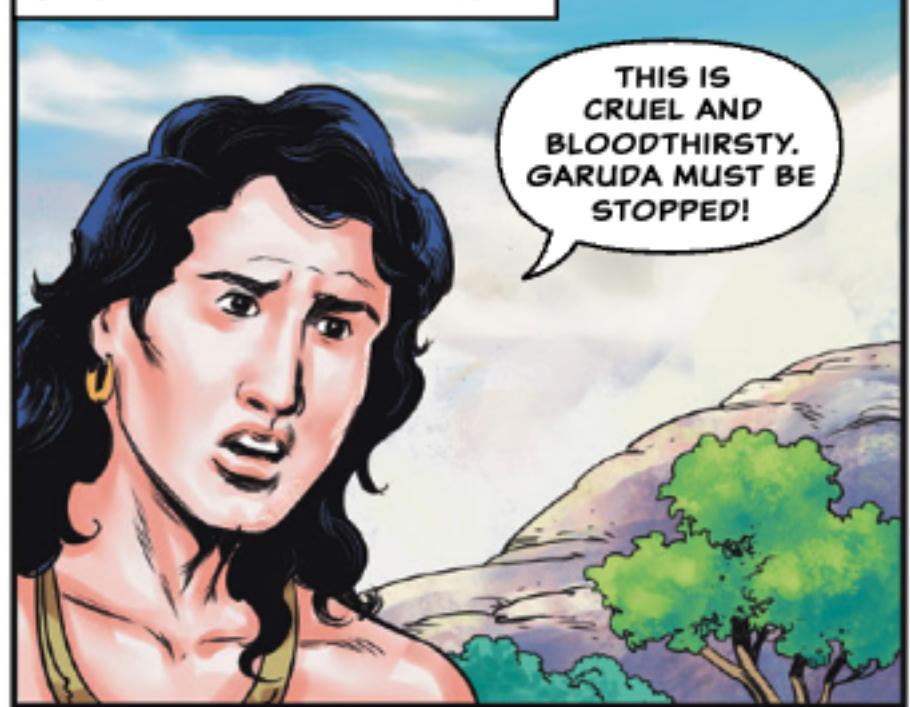
AN OLD LADY AND HER SON WERE SITTING THERE. THEY BELONGED TO THE NAGA\* KINGDOM.



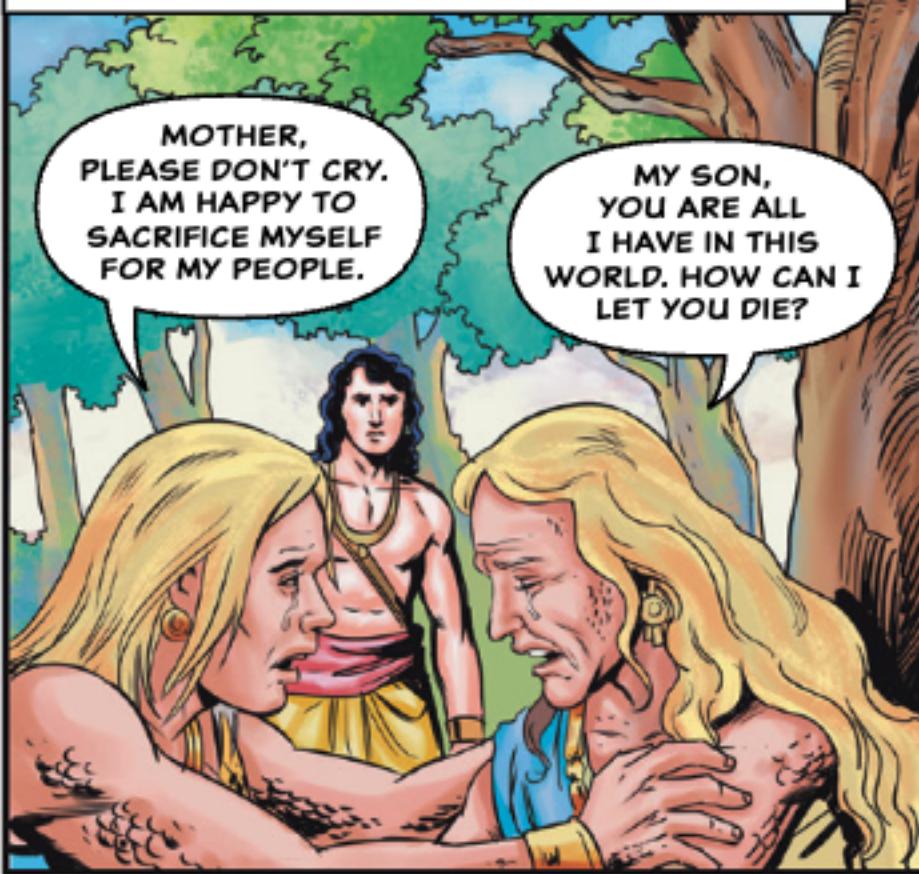
IT WAS REVEALED THAT THE NAGAS OWED A DEBT TO GARUDA, FOR WHICH THE PAYMENT WAS THAT GARUDA COULD EAT ONE YOUNG PERSON EVERY DAY.



JIMUTAVAHANA WAS APPALLED.



THE NAGA LAD TRIED TO CONSOLE HIS MOTHER —



SO SAYING, THE BOY HURRIED AWAY.

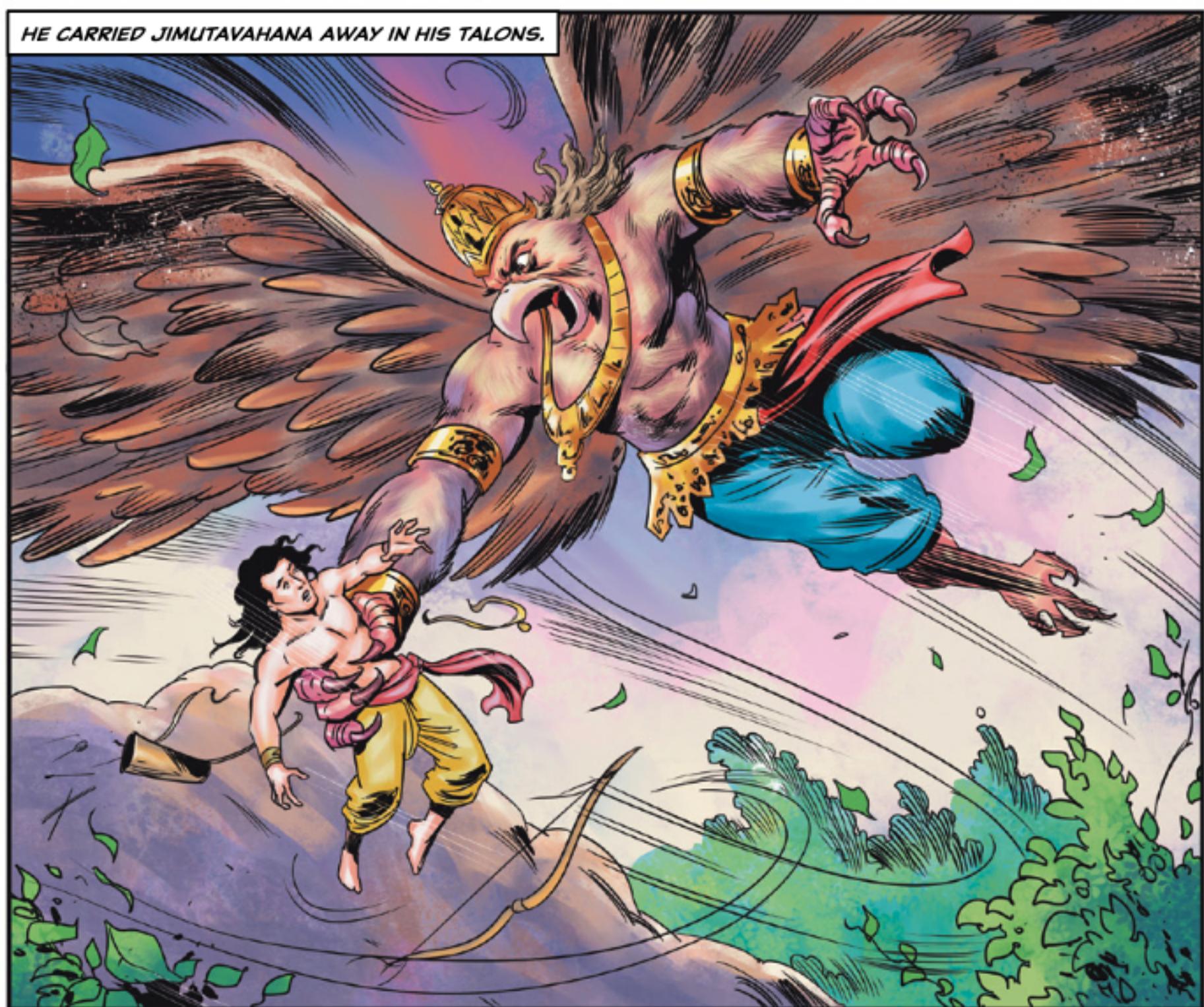
JIMUTAVAHANA SAW HIS CHANCE —



JUST THEN, GARUDA SWOOPED DOWN FROM THE SUMMIT.



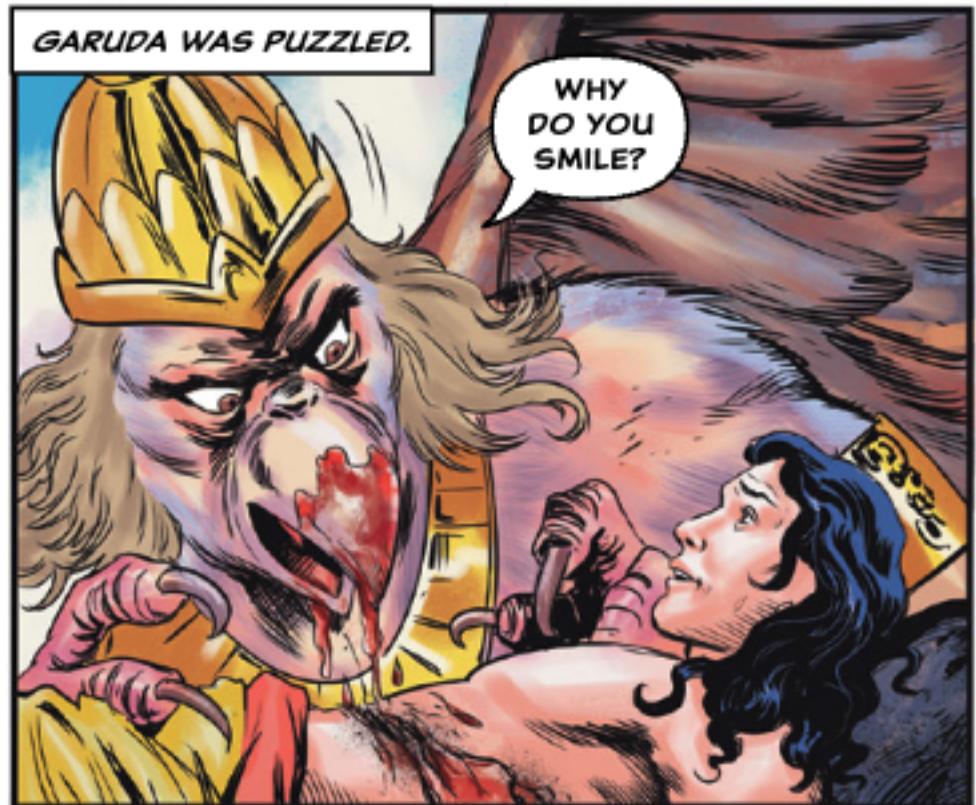
HE CARRIED JIMUTAVAHANA AWAY IN HIS TALONS.



PLACING JIMUTAVAHANA ON A ROCK AT THE CREST, GARUDA BEGAN PECKING AT HIM. EVEN AS BLOOD DRIPPED DOWN, JIMUTAVAHANA SMILED IN JOY.



GARUDA WAS PUZZLED.

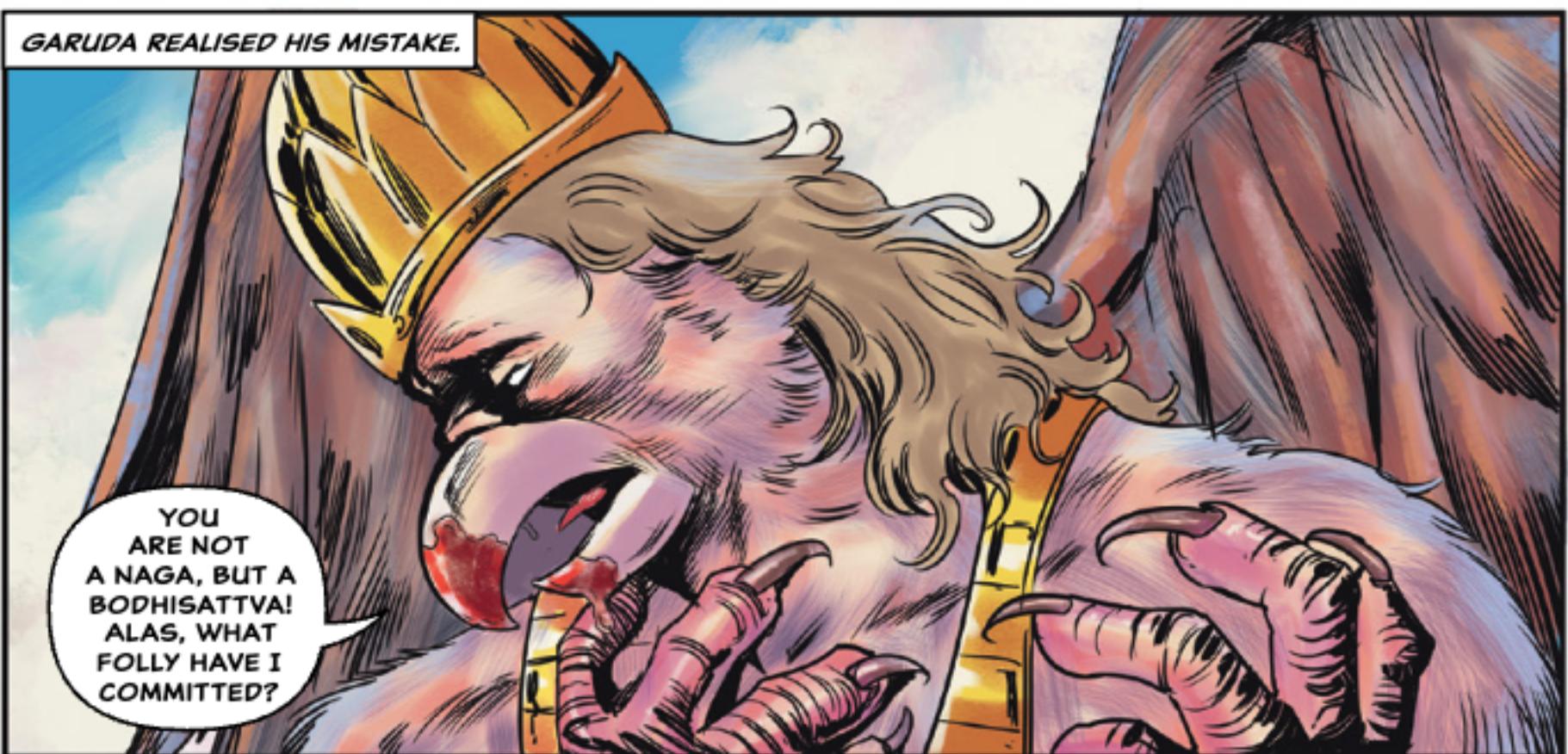


I AM HAPPY THAT THIS MORTAL BODY IS PROVIDING YOU WITH FOOD. PLEASE CONTINUE TO EAT.

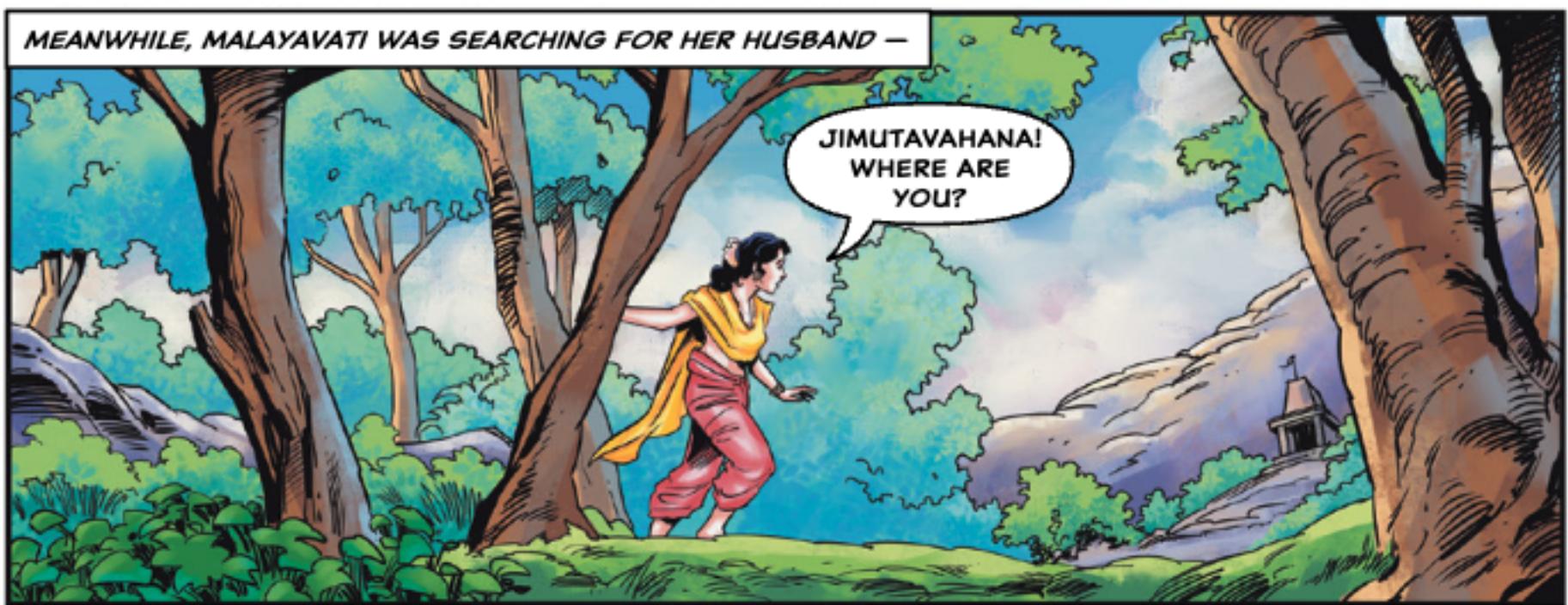


GARUDA REALISED HIS MISTAKE.

YOU ARE NOT A NAGA, BUT A BODHISATTVA! ALAS, WHAT FOLLY HAVE I COMMITTED?



MEANWHILE, MALAYAVATI WAS SEARCHING FOR HER HUSBAND —



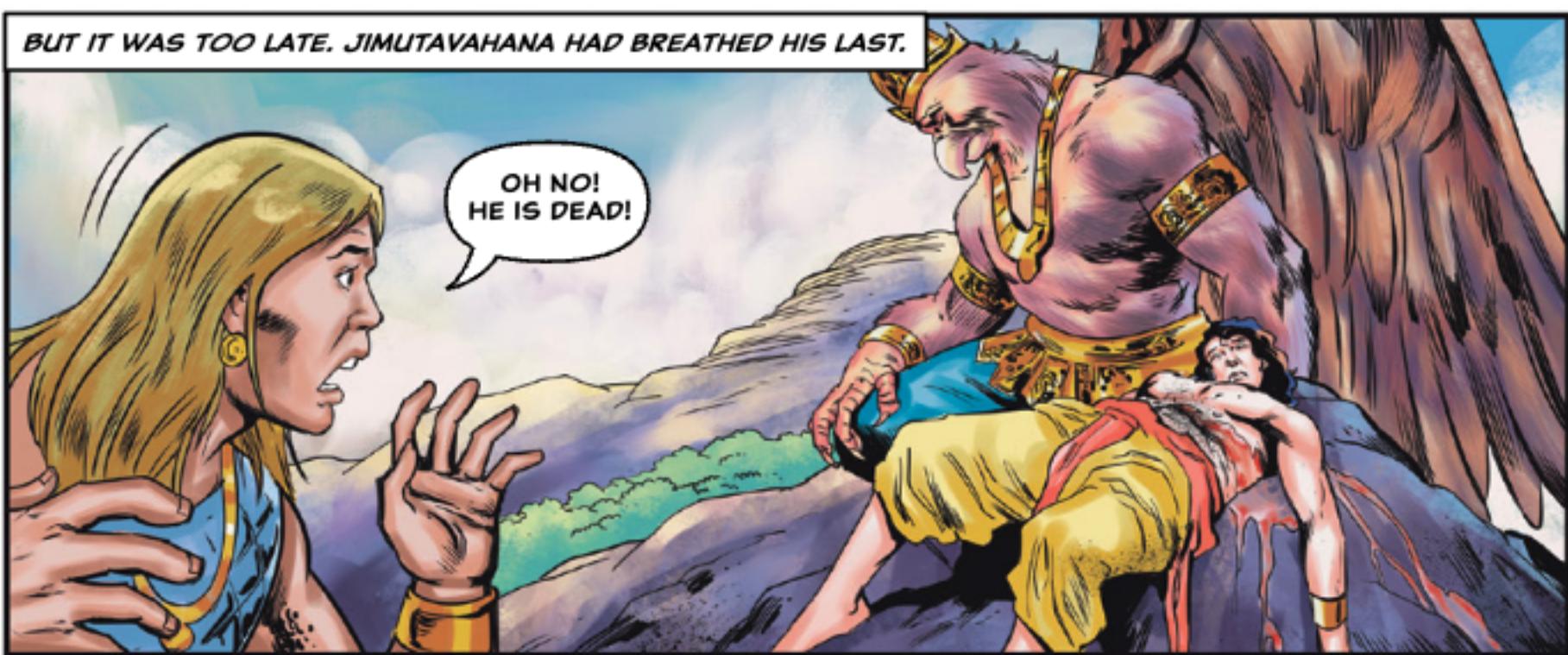
SUDDENLY —



WHEN THE YOUNG NAGA RETURNED FROM THE TEMPLE, HE WAS HORRIFIED TO FIND THAT JIMUTAVAHANA HAD TAKEN HIS PLACE.



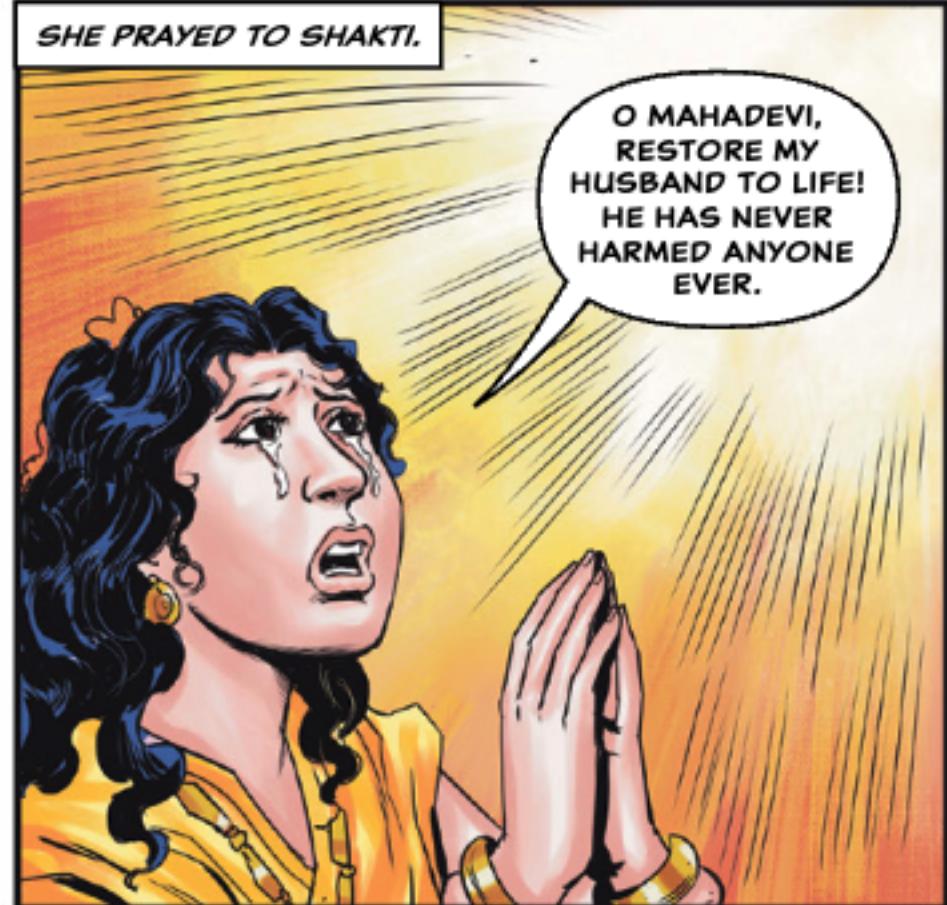
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. JIMUTAVAHANA HAD BREATHED HIS LAST.



MALAYAVATI ALSO REACHED THERE.

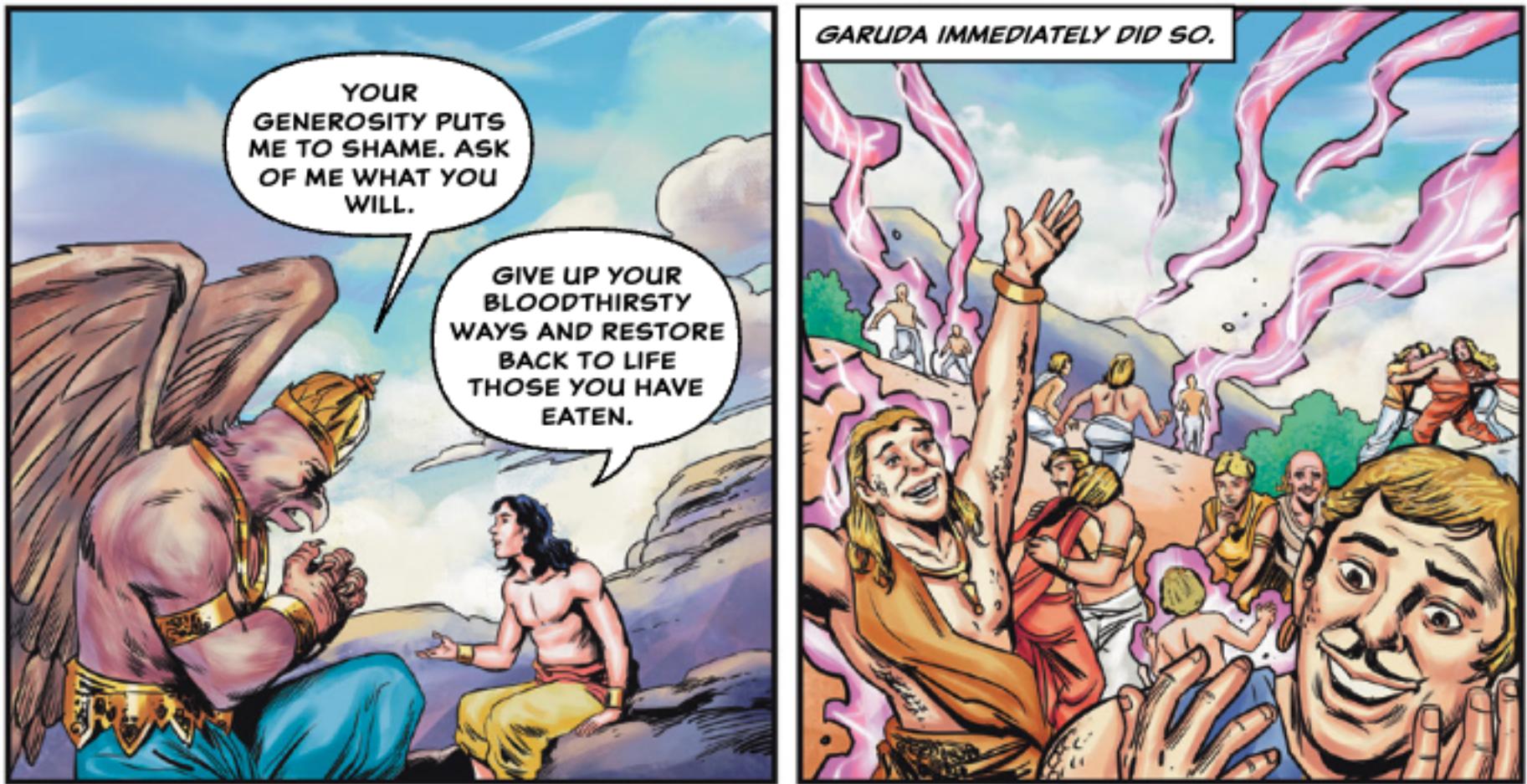


SHE PRAYED TO SHAKTI.

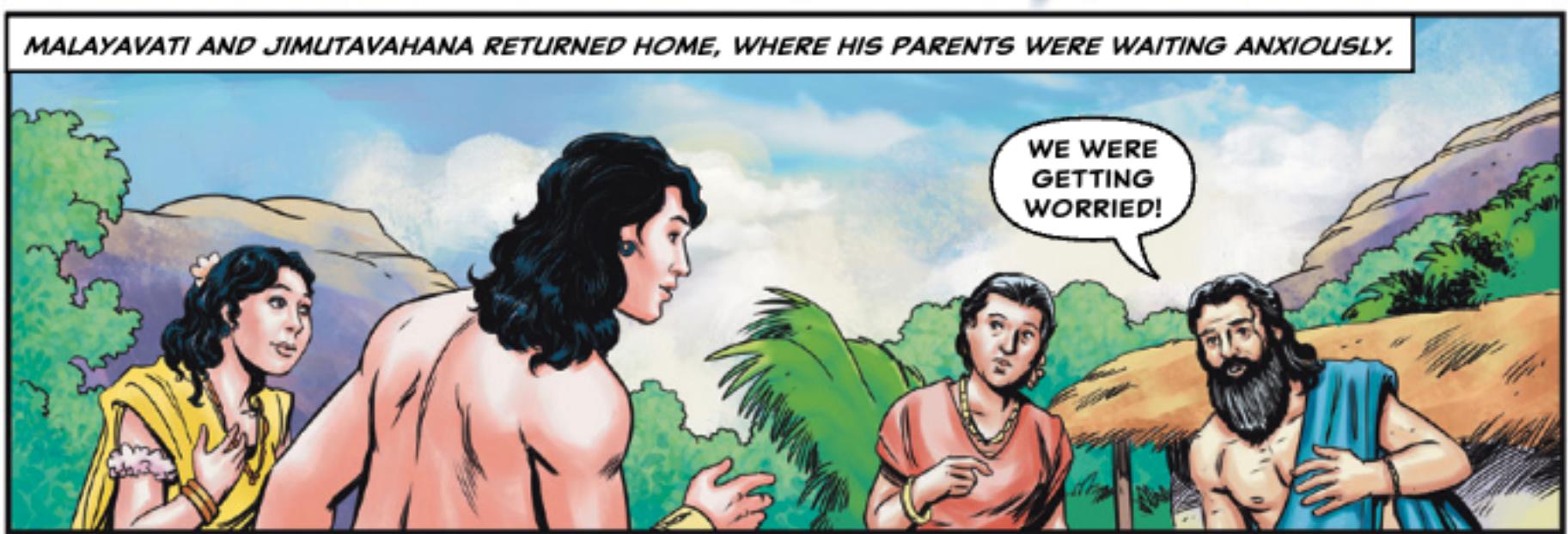


HER PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.

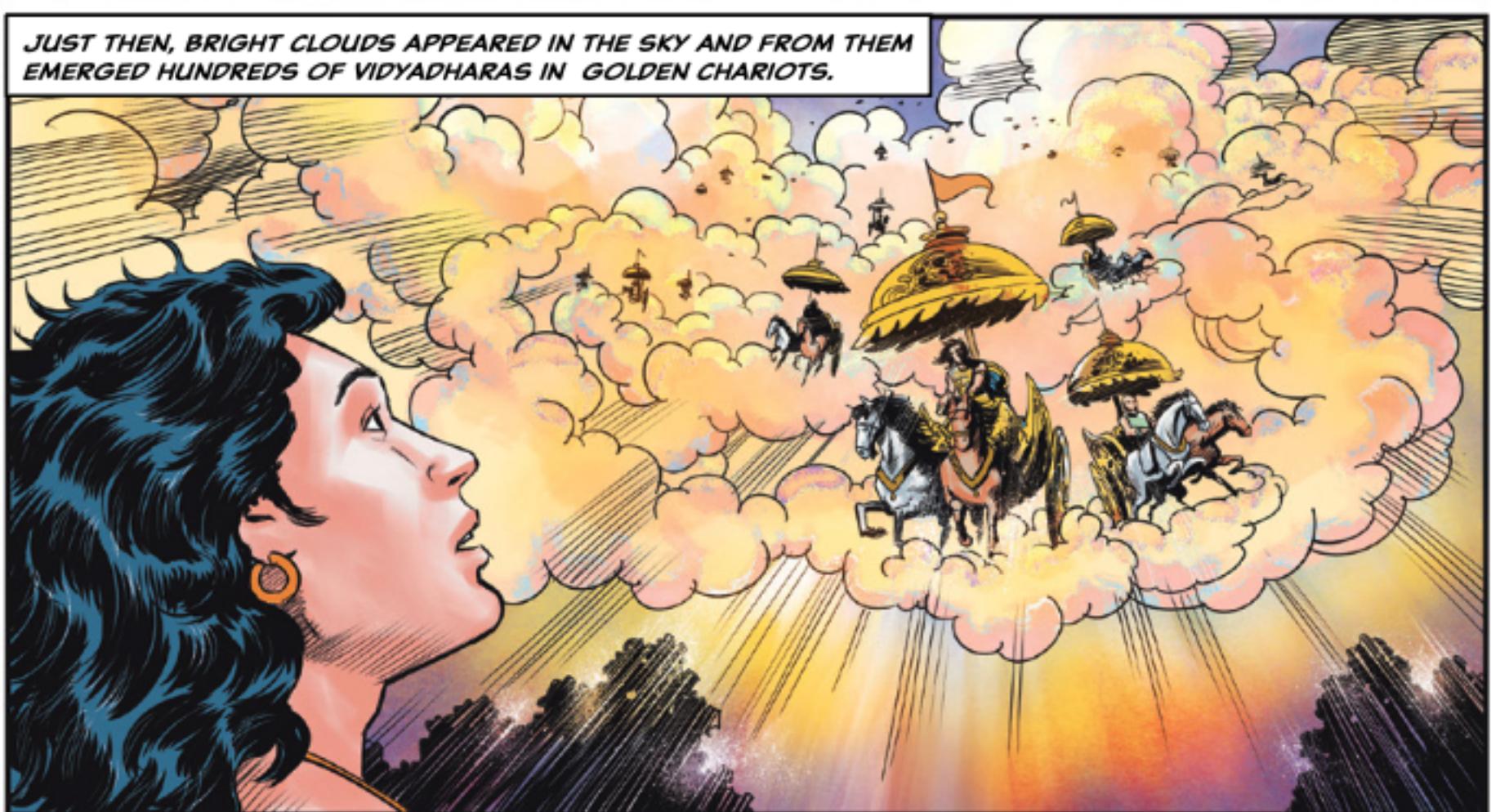




MALAYAVATI AND JIMUTAVAHANA RETURNED HOME, WHERE HIS PARENTS WERE WAITING ANXIOUSLY.

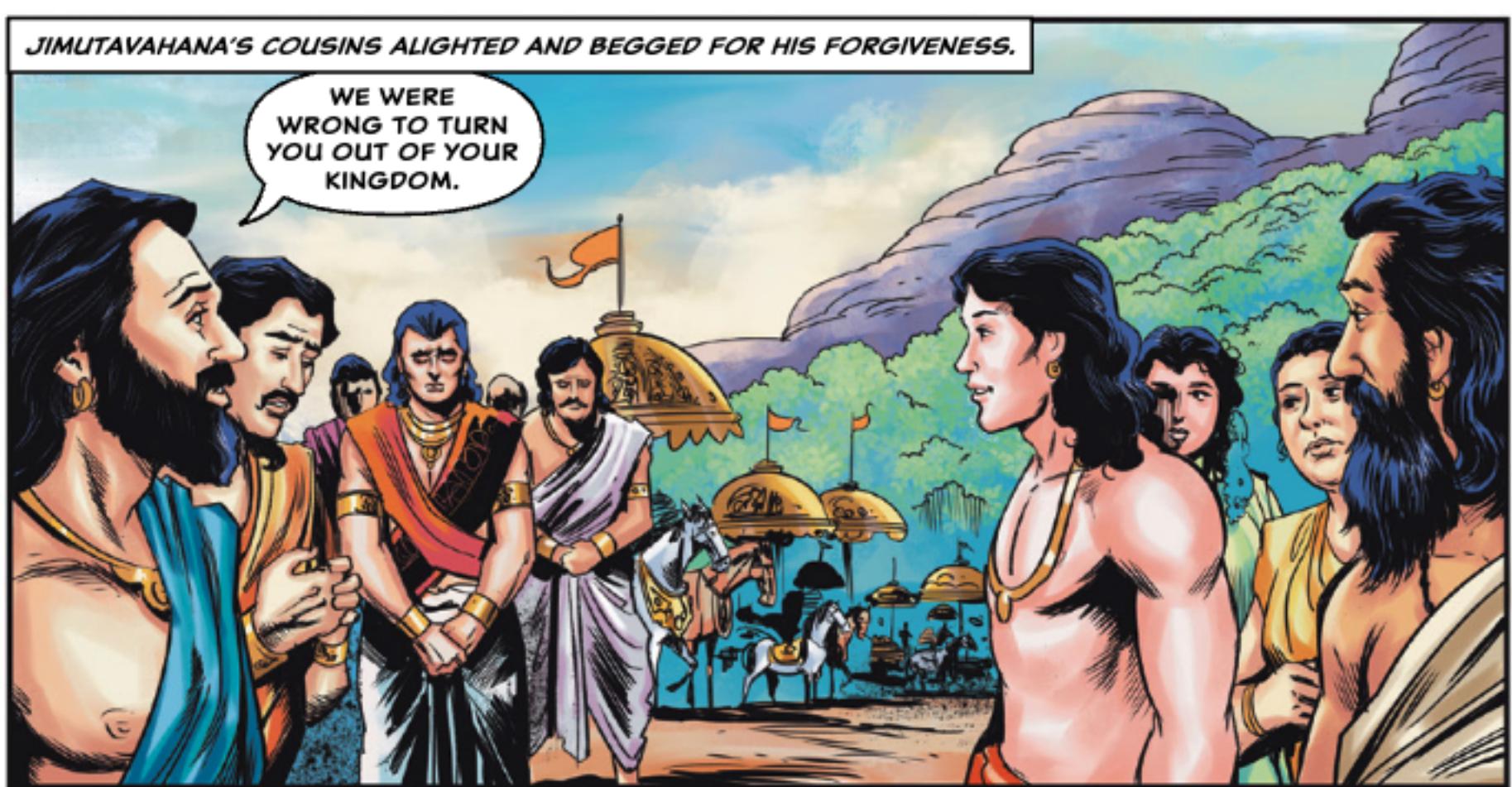


JUST THEN, BRIGHT CLOUDS APPEARED IN THE SKY AND FROM THEM EMERGED HUNDREDS OF VIDYADHARAS IN GOLDEN CHARIOTS.



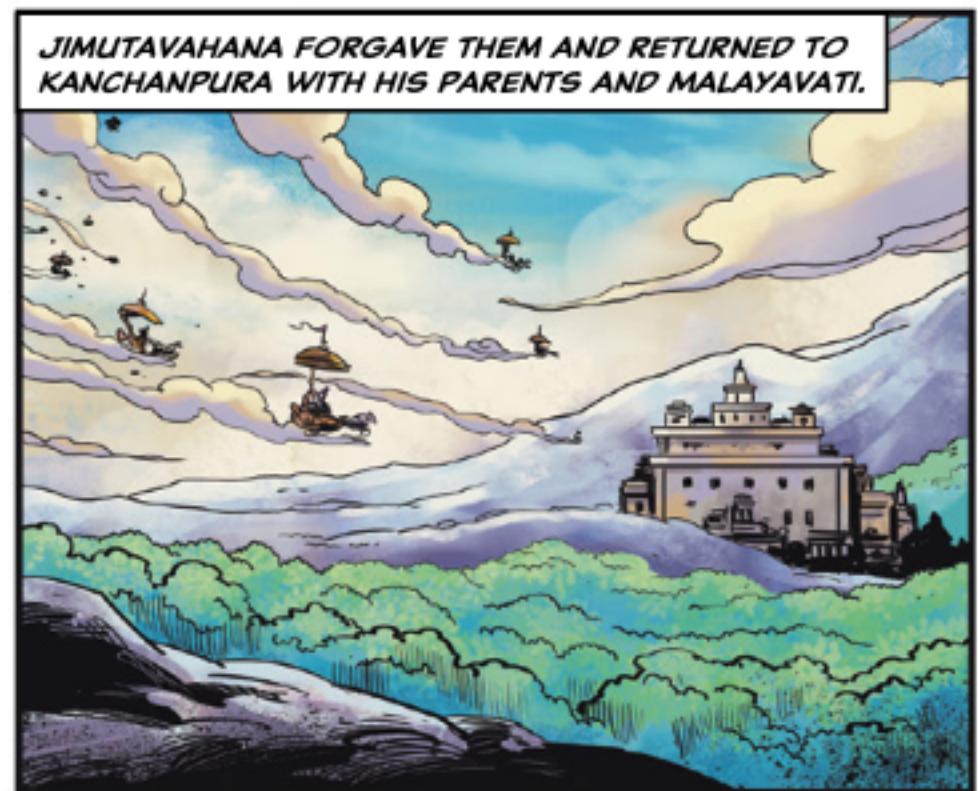
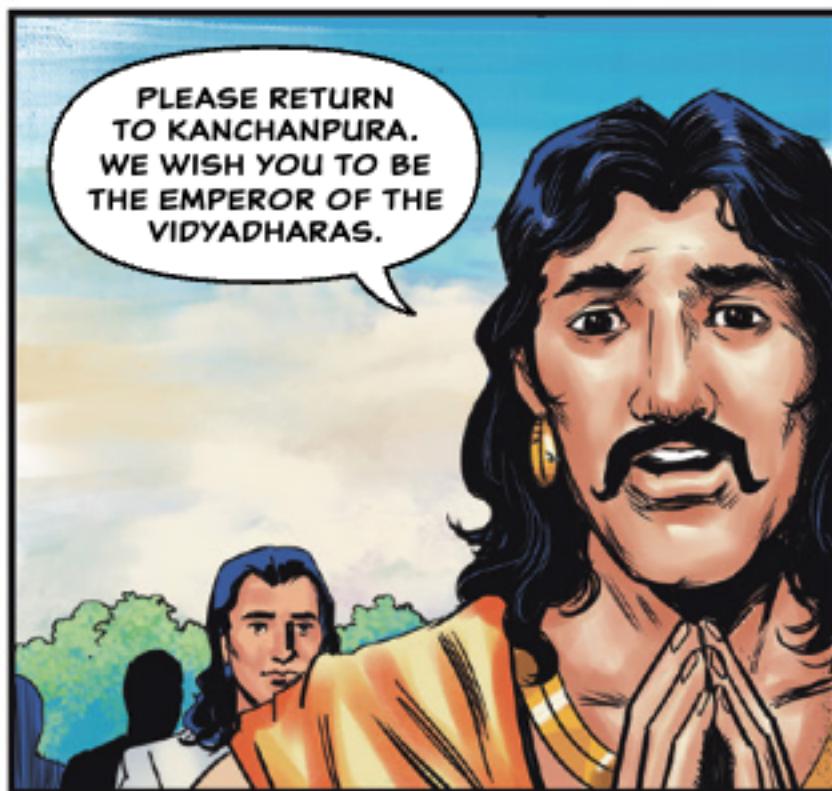
JIMUTAVAHANA'S COUSINS ALIGHTED AND BEGGED FOR HIS FORGIVENESS.

WE WERE  
WRONG TO TURN  
YOU OUT OF YOUR  
KINGDOM.

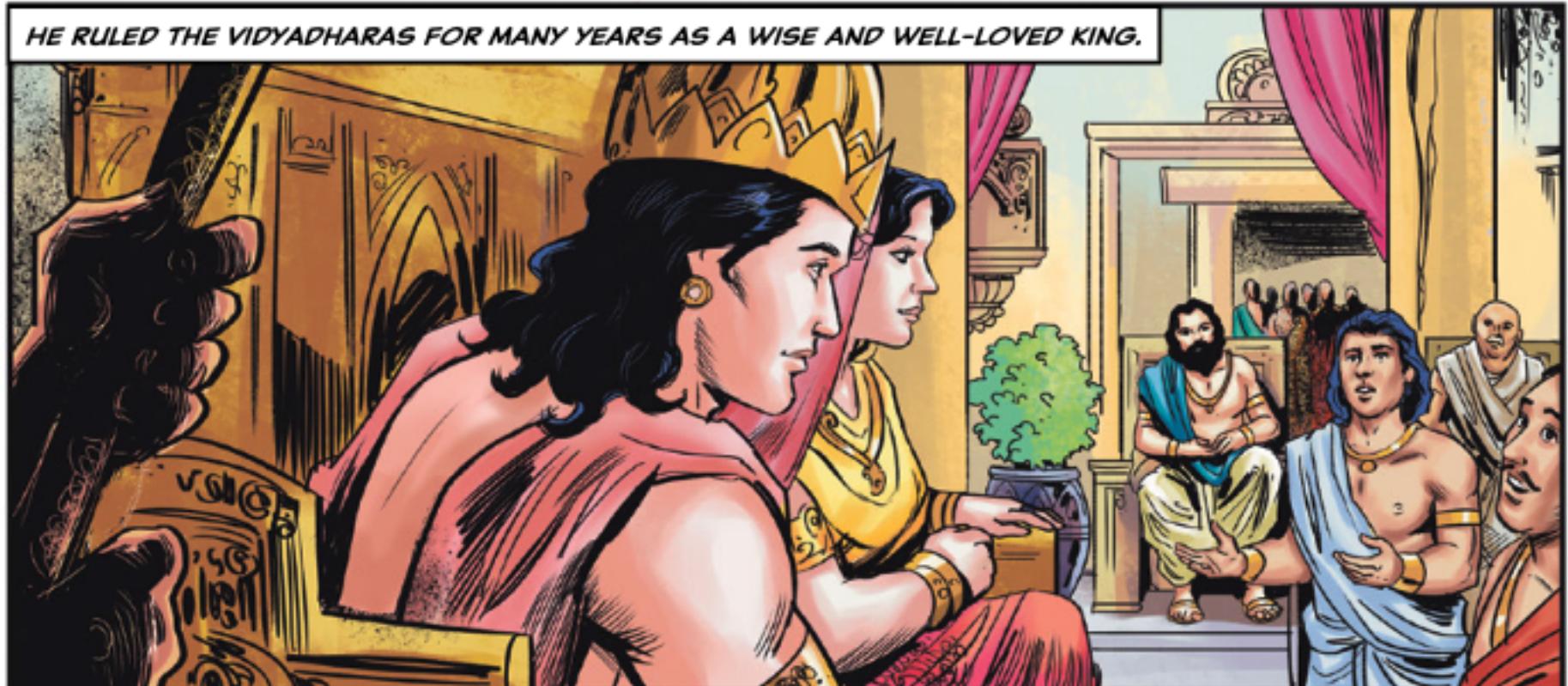


PLEASE RETURN  
TO KANCHANPURA.  
WE WISH YOU TO BE  
THE EMPEROR OF THE  
VIDYADHARAS.

JIMUTAVAHANA FORGAVE THEM AND RETURNED TO  
KANCHANPURA WITH HIS PARENTS AND MALAYAVATI.



HE RULED THE VIDYADHARAS FOR MANY YEARS AS A WISE AND WELL-LOVED KING.



# SUDHANA AND MANOHARA

KINNARAS ARE FAIRY-LIKE CREATURES WITH WINGS. THEY ARE FOND OF MUSIC AND LIVE IN HIDDEN, FARAWAY KINGDOMS. ONCE IN LOVE, THEY ARE LOYAL FOREVER. ONE SUCH LEGENDARY LOVE STORY IS THAT OF SUDHANA, A PRINCE OF HASTINAPURA AND MANOHARA, A KINNARI PRINCESS.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN HASTINAPURA, A HUNTER NAMED PHALAKA WAS WANDERING THROUGH A FOREST.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL LAKE, WITH CRYSTAL CLEAR WATER AND SPARKLING LOTUSES!

A RISHI LIVED IN A HUT BY THE SIDE OF THE LAKE.

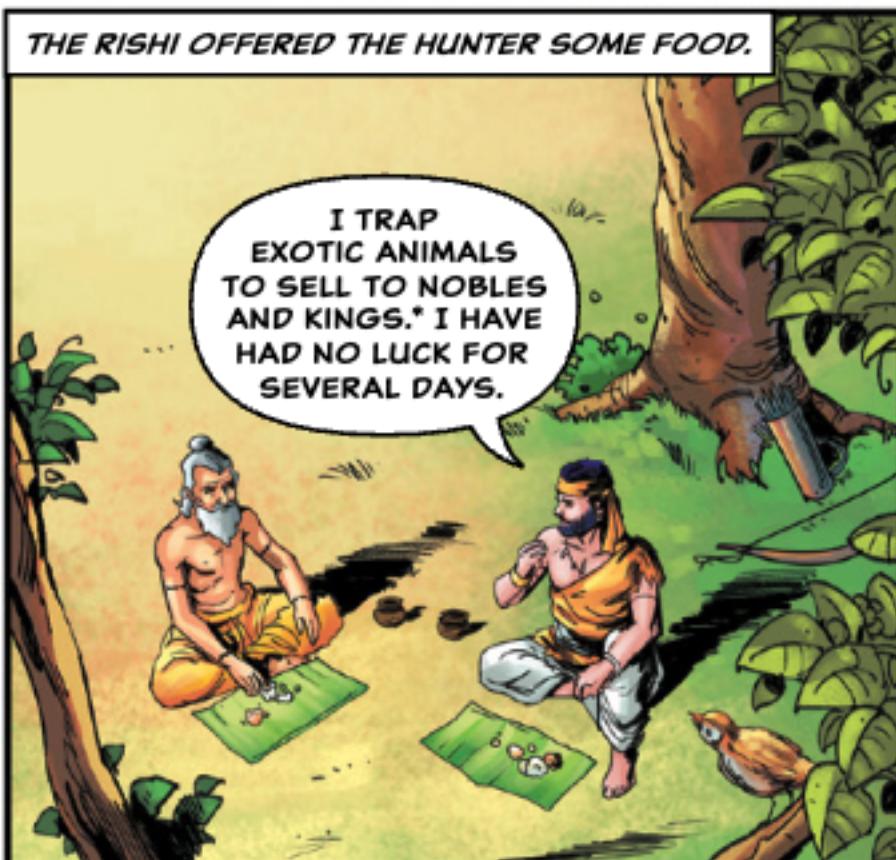
GREETINGS O SAGE, MAY I REST HERE AWHILE?

CERTAINLY, MY SON.

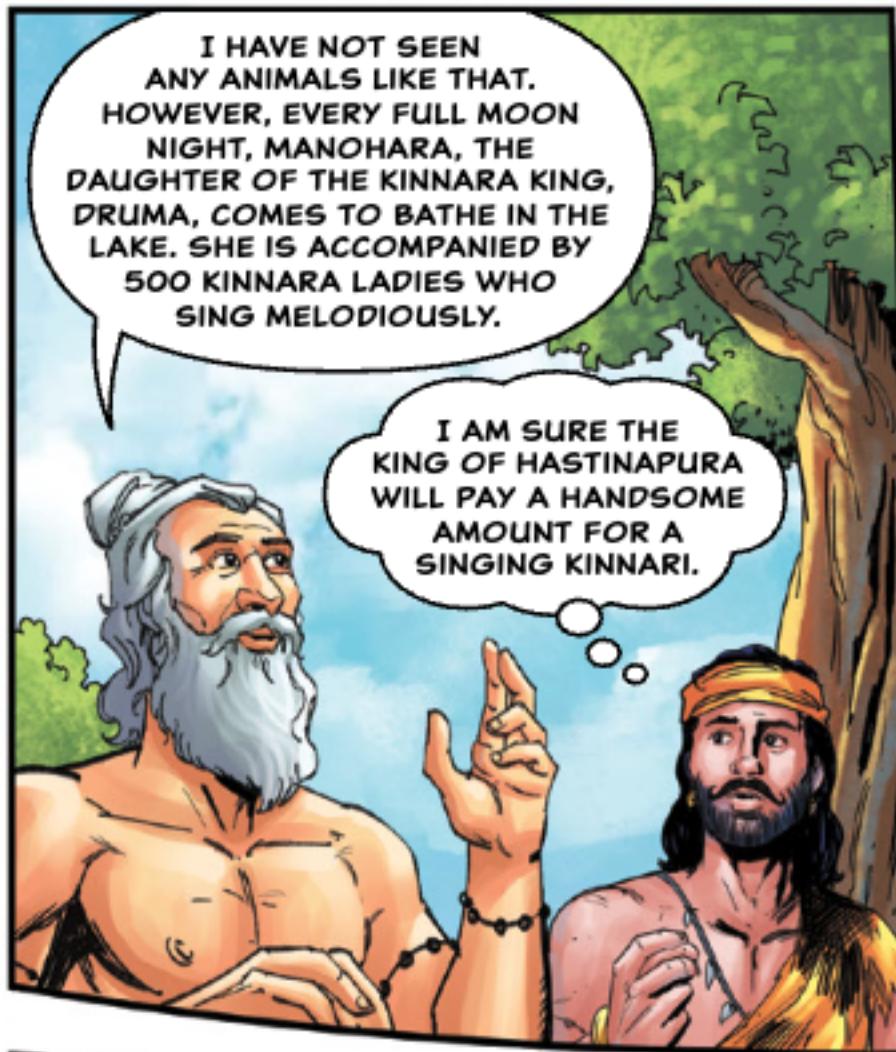
THE RISHI OFFERED THE HUNTER SOME FOOD.

I TRAP EXOTIC ANIMALS TO SELL TO NOBLES AND KINGS.\* I HAVE HAD NO LUCK FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

TELL ME, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY GOLDEN DEER OR TALKING MONKEYS THAT I COULD ENSNARE?



\*TRAPPING AND SELLING OF WILD ANIMALS IS NOW BANNED IN INDIA

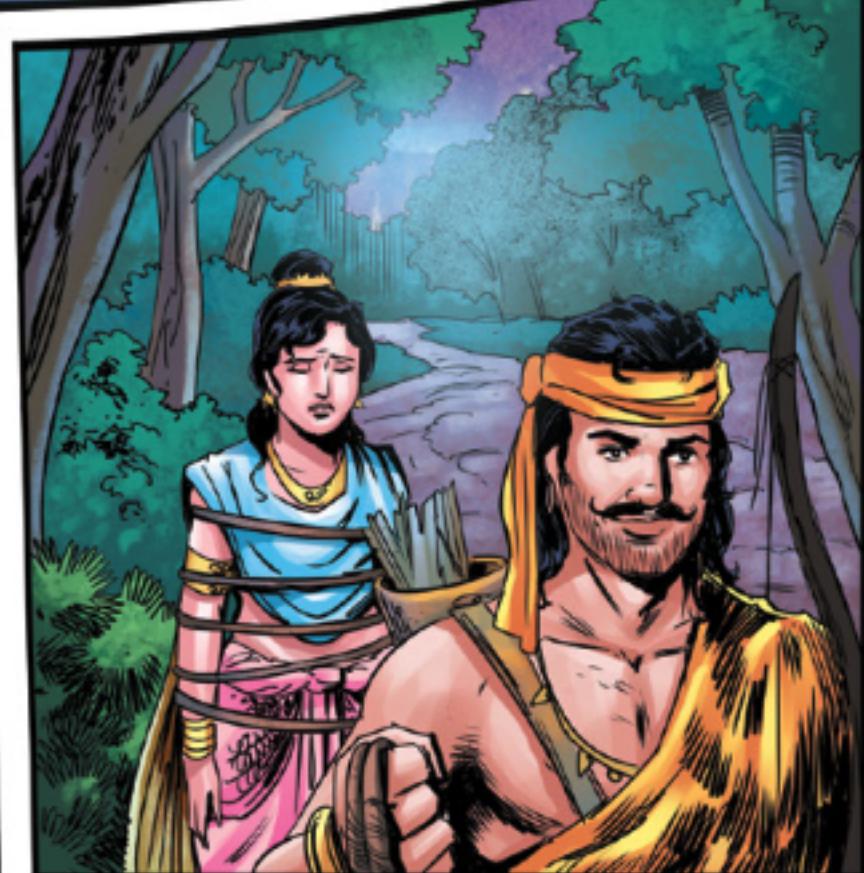
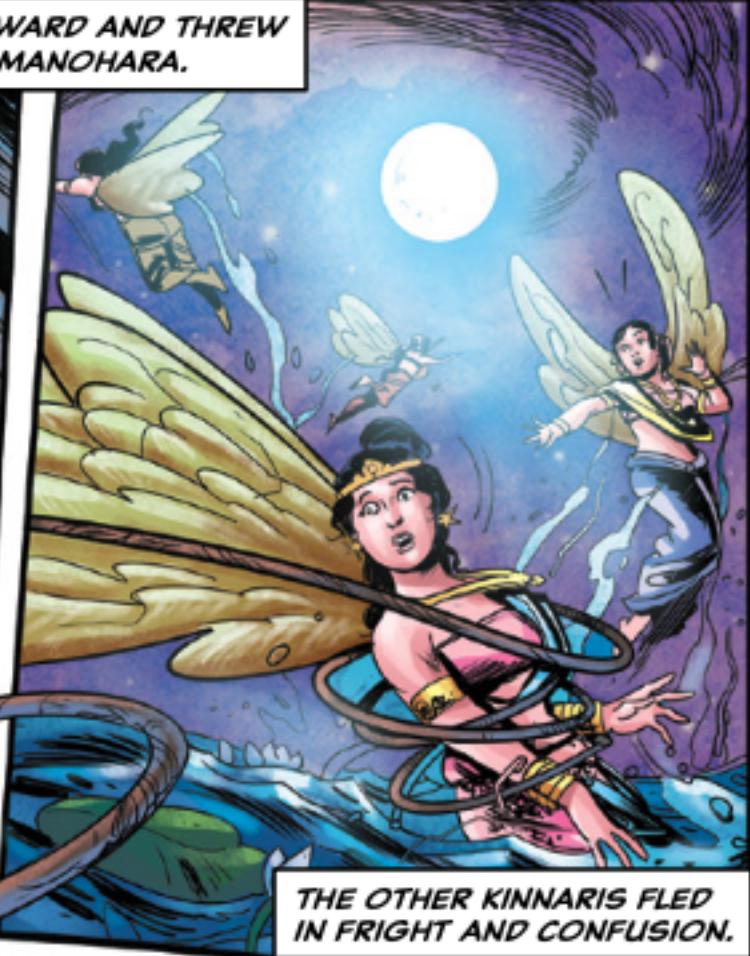


\*HEADBAND

THE KINNARIS SANG AS MANOHARA BATHED BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON.

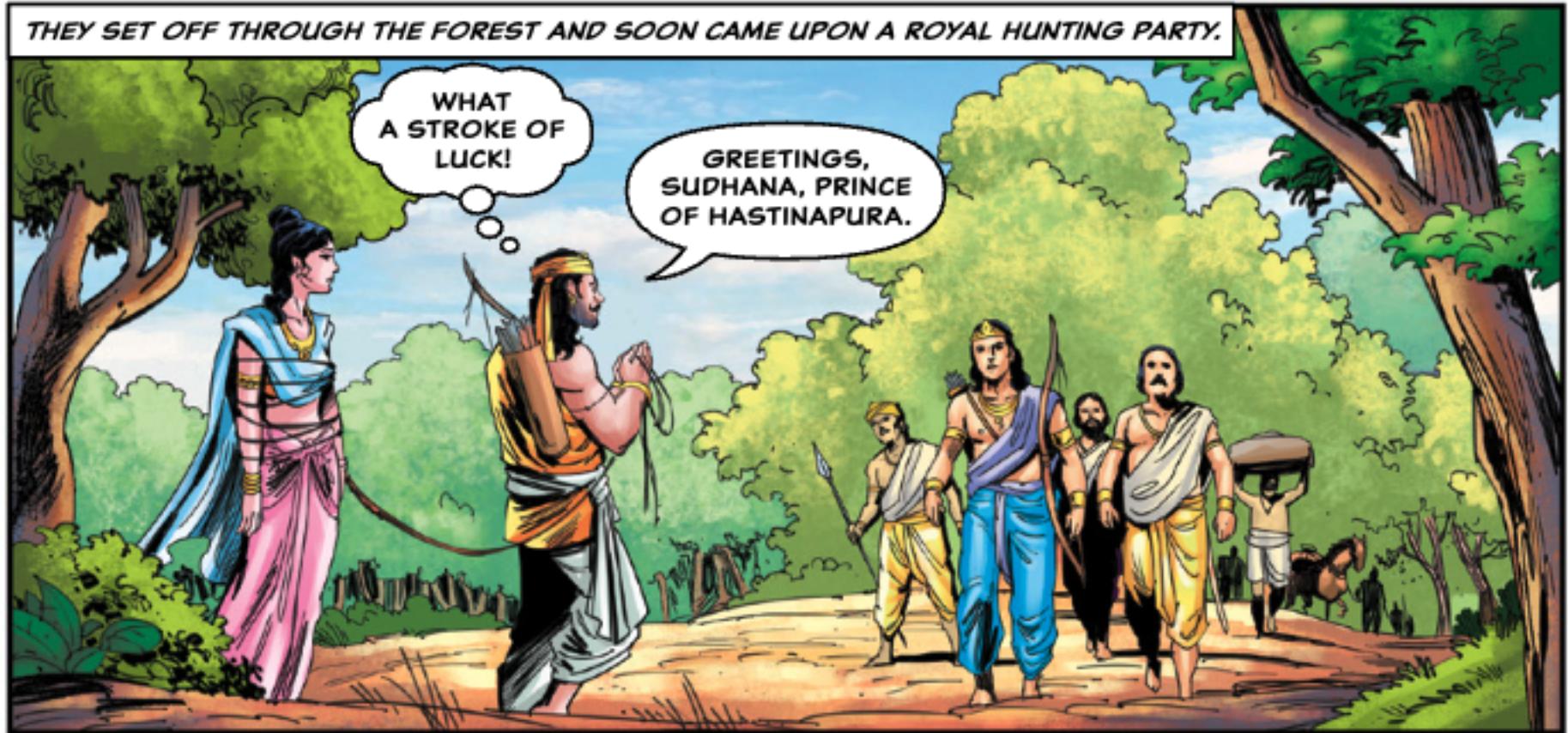


PHALAKA LEAPED FORWARD AND THREW HIS LASSO AROUND MANOHARA.

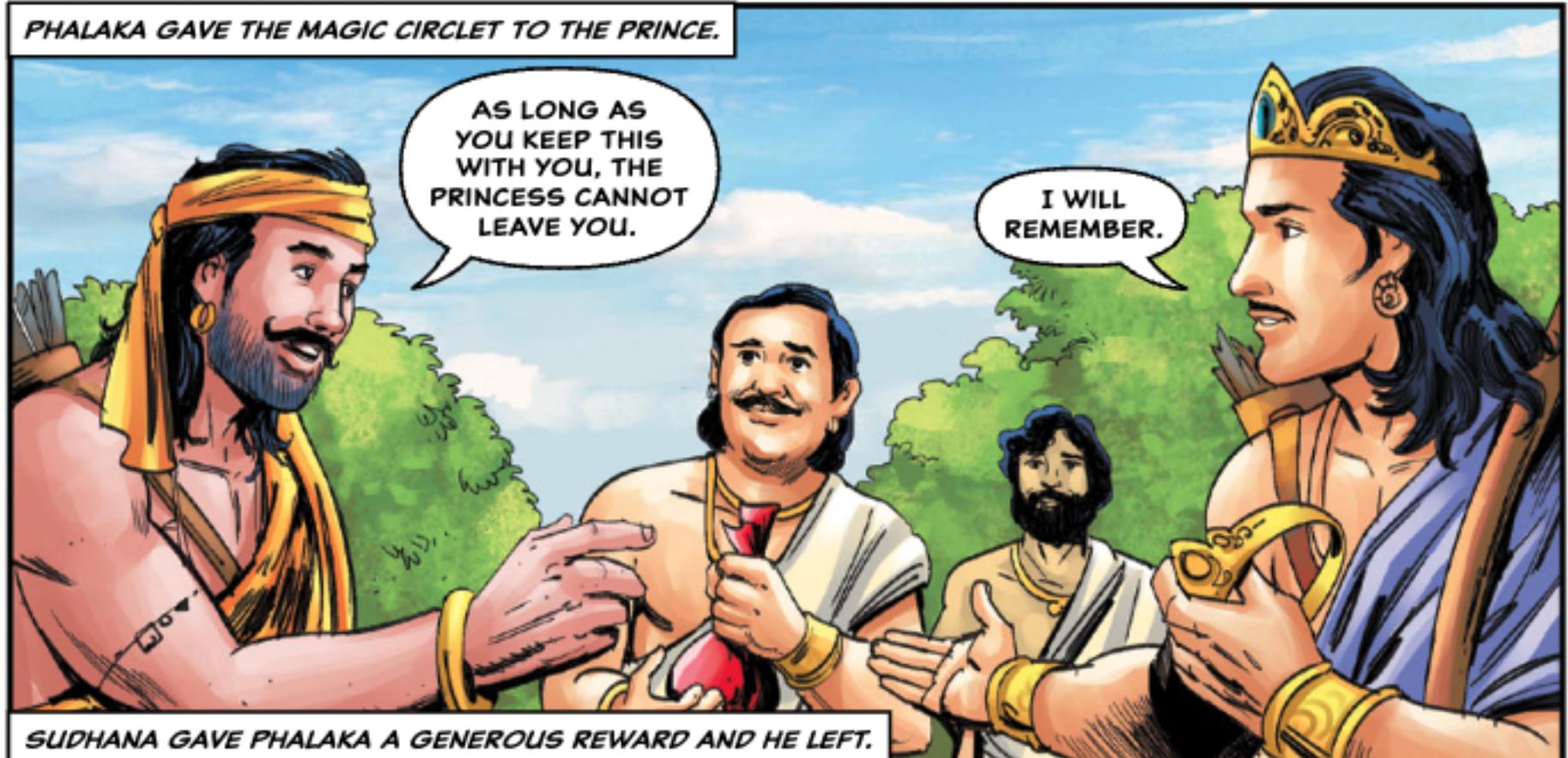


## SUDHANA AND MANOHARA

THEY SET OFF THROUGH THE FOREST AND SOON CAME UPON A ROYAL HUNTING PARTY.



PHALAKA GAVE THE MAGIC CIRCLET TO THE PRINCE.

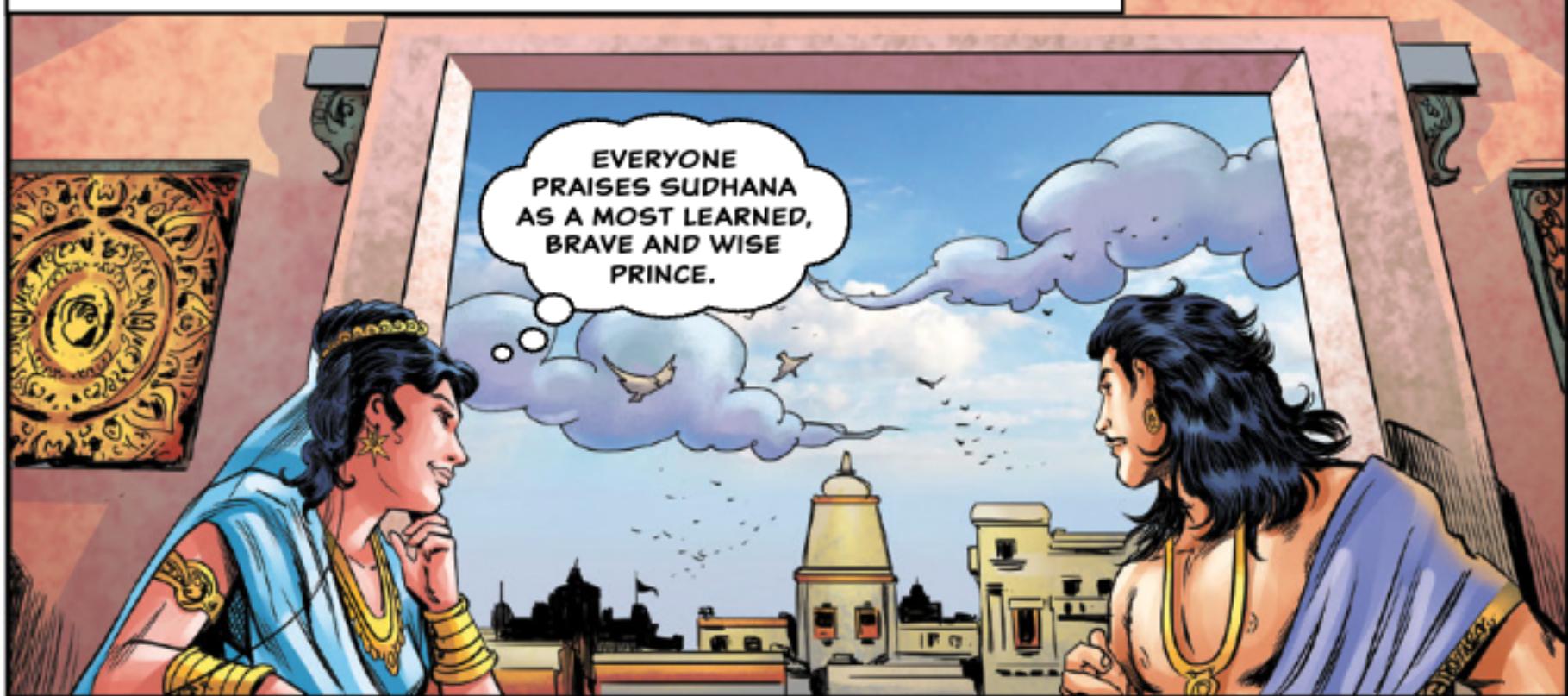


SUDHANA GAVE PHALAKA A GENEROUS REWARD AND HE LEFT.

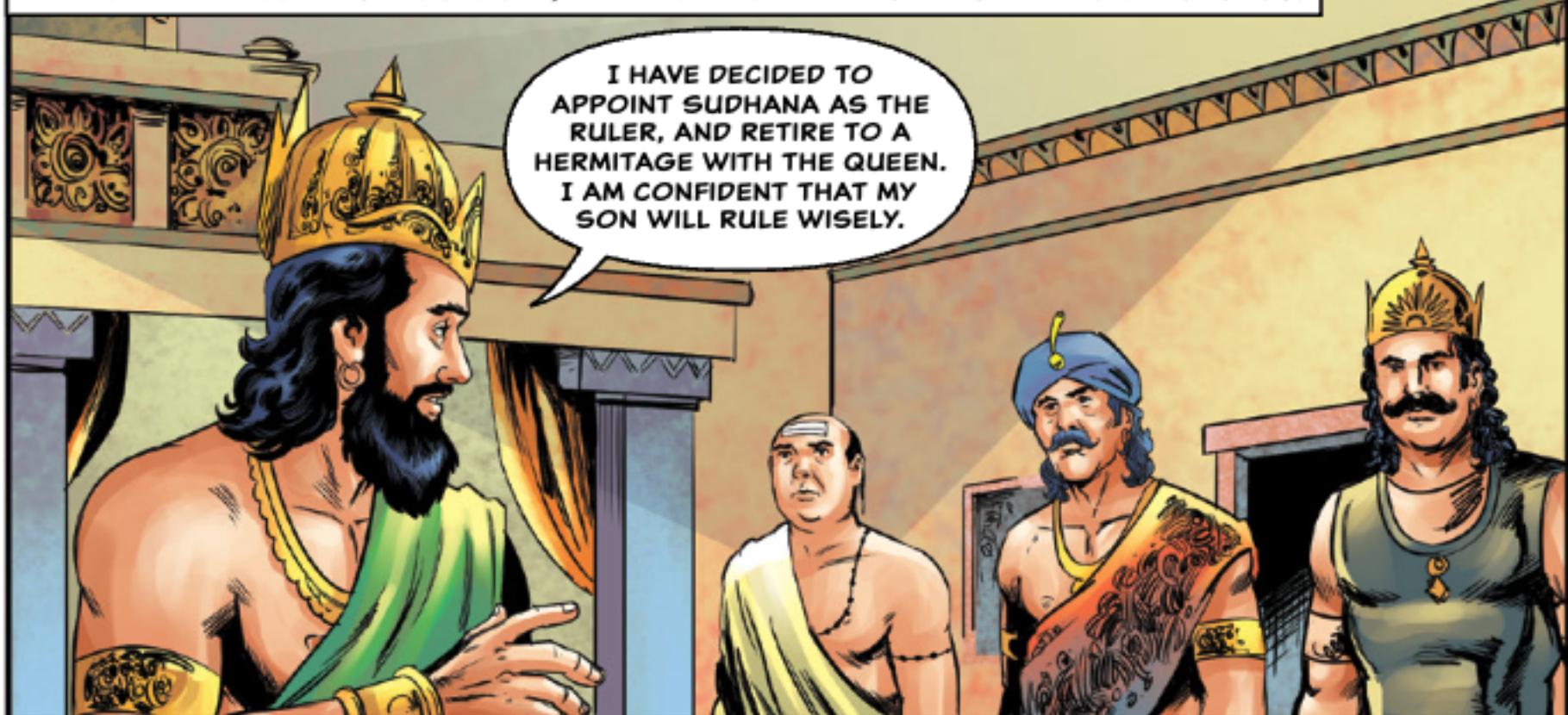
SUDHANA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA WITH MANOHARA AND MARRIED HER.



MANOHARA FELL IN LOVE WITH HER HANDSOME AND ACCOMPLISHED HUSBAND.



MANY DAYS PASSED IN BLISS. ONE DAY, THE KING OF HASTINAPURA SUMMONED HIS COUNCIL.



## SUDHANA AND MANOHARA

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS NOT HAPPY.

IF SUDHANA BECOMES KING, HE WILL DISMISS US AND APPOINT HIS FRIENDS AS ADVISORS.

WE WILL HAVE NO POWERS AT ALL. WE MUST PUT A STOP TO THIS PLAN.

YOUR MAJESTY, PERHAPS WE SHOULD TEST THE PRINCE BEFORE TAKING SUCH A BIG DECISION?

HMM... WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

THE ROYAL PUROHITA\* WAS ALSO NOT PLEASED.

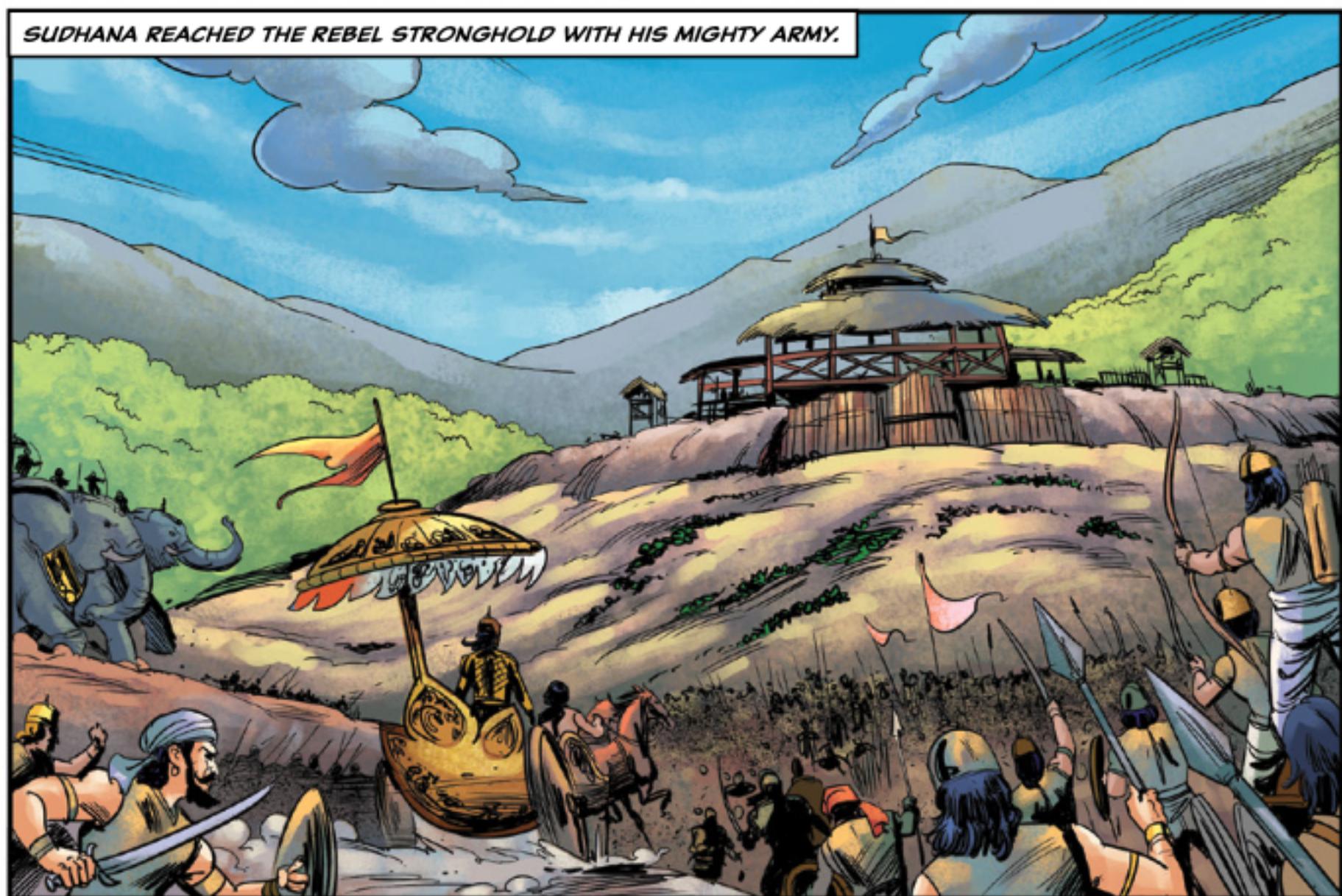
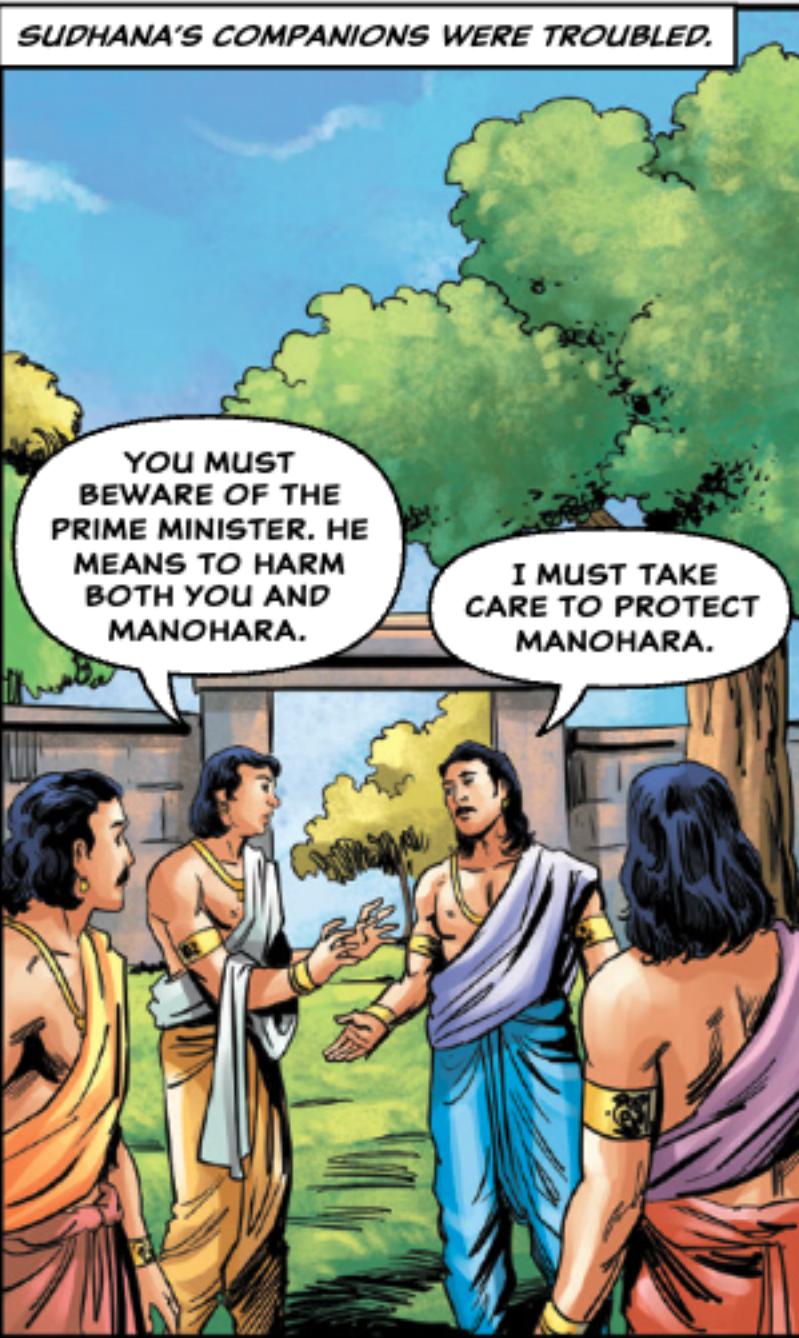
THAT IS A GOOD IDEA.

THE KING SUMMONED SUDHANA.

GO NORTH WITH THE ARMY AND SUBDU THE REBELLION.

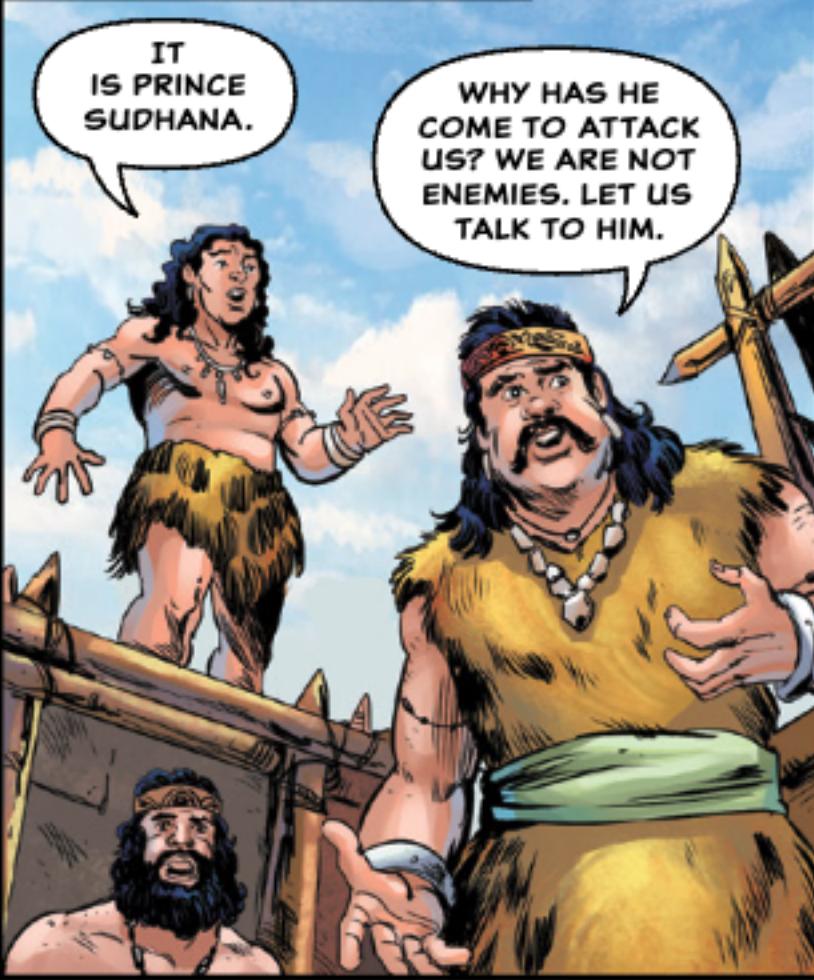
GLADLY, FATHER. YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND.

THE MOUNTAIN TRIBES WILL KILL SUDHANA FOR SURE. AND WHILE HE IS AWAY, I WILL ALSO GET RID OF MANOHARA.

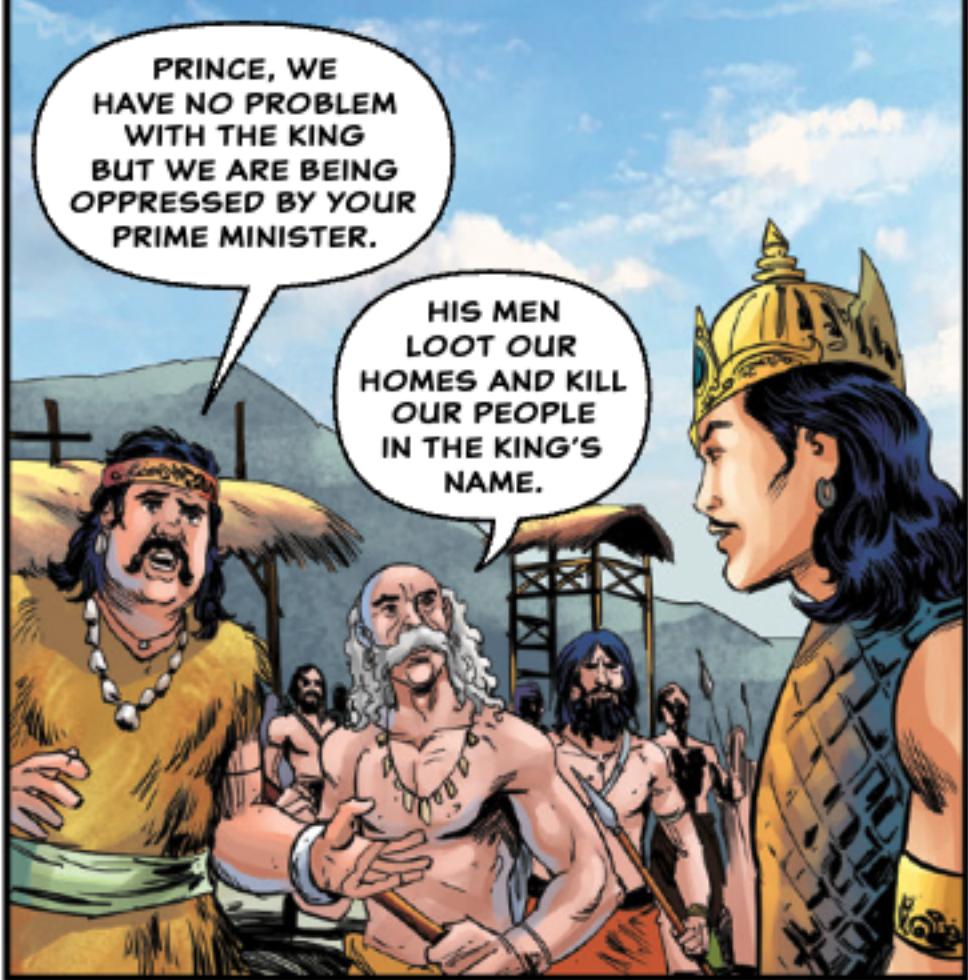


## SUDHANA AND MANOHARA

THE TRIBALS WERE SURPRISED TO SEE SUCH A BIG ARMY.



SUDHANA MET WITH THE TRIBALS.



SUDHANA REALISED THE PRIME MINISTER'S EVIL INTENTIONS.



SUDHANA ACCEPTED THE CHIEF'S HOSPITALITY.



MEANWHILE, IN HASTINAPURA, THE PRIME MINISTER WENT RUSHING INTO THE KING'S CHAMBER.

YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE HAD A TERRIFYING VISION! HASTINAPURA WAS IN FLAMES AND THE ROYAL FAMILY WERE BEING PECKED BY VULTURES!

HOW AWFUL!  
SUMMON THE PUROHITA TO INTERPRET THE DREAM.

THE ROYAL PUROHITA KNEW EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY.

A GREAT CALAMITY IS ABOUT TO BEFALL THE ROYAL FAMILY. TO AVOID IT, WE MUST MAKE A SACRIFICE OF A SUPERNATURAL CREATURE.

WE MUST SACRIFICE THE KINNARI, MANOHARA. SHE IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING.

YES,  
YES, AT ONCE!

WHAT A TERRIBLE DECISION!

AS ARRANGEMENTS BEGAN FOR THE SACRIFICE, THE QUEEN PLEADED WITH THE KING.

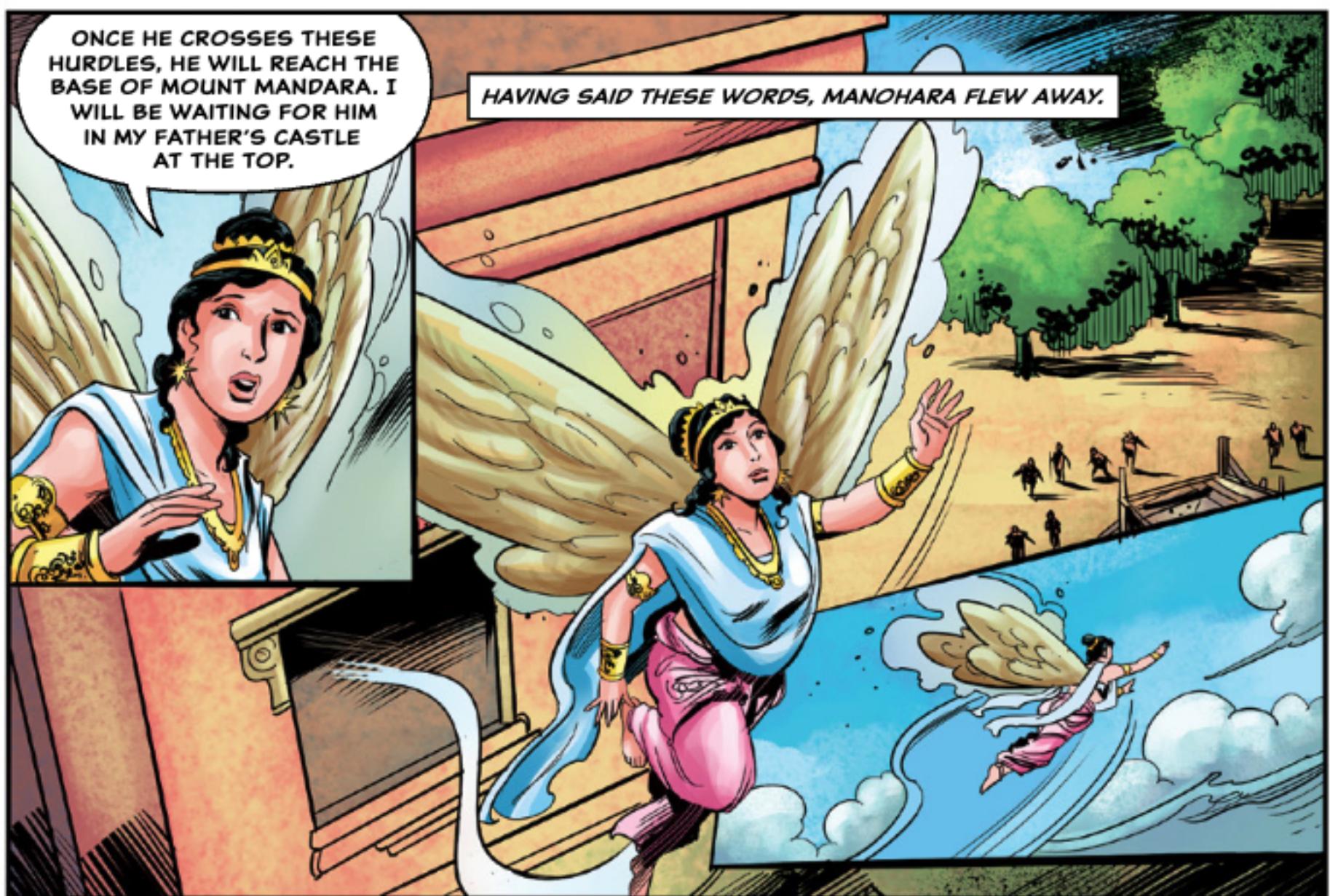
MANOHARA IS OUR SON'S BELOVED WIFE. WE CANNOT SACRIFICE HER.

BUT THE KING WAS ADAMANT.

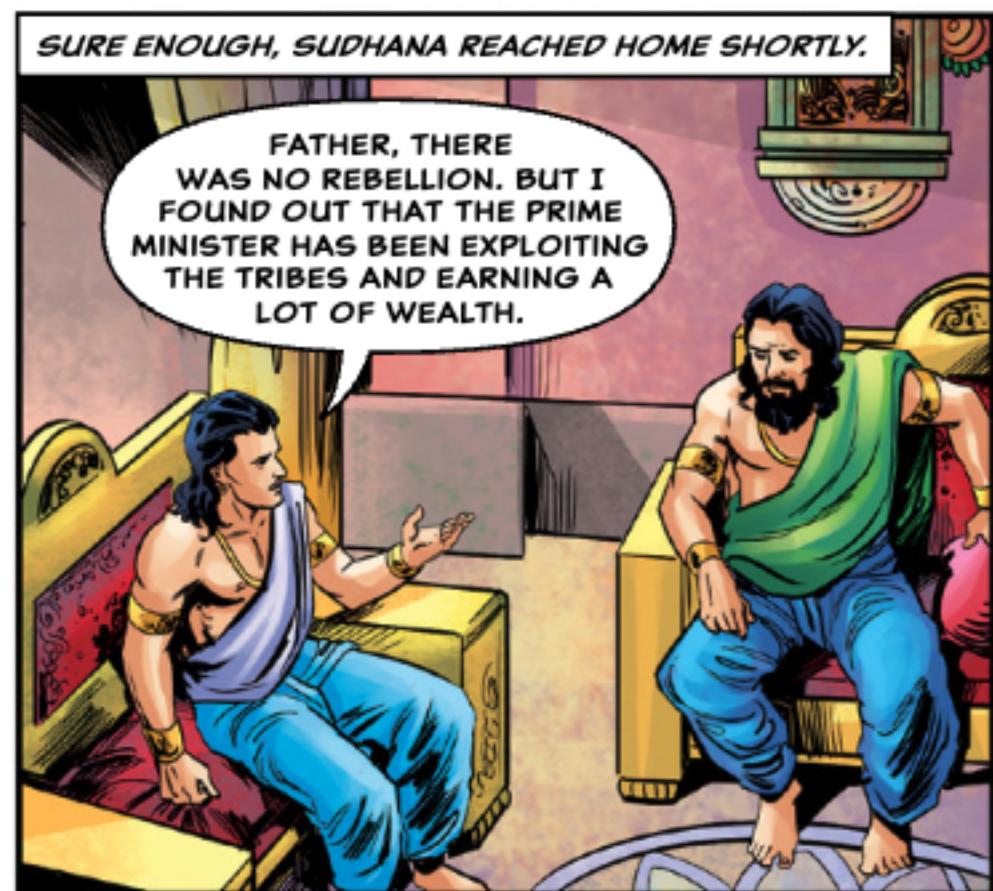
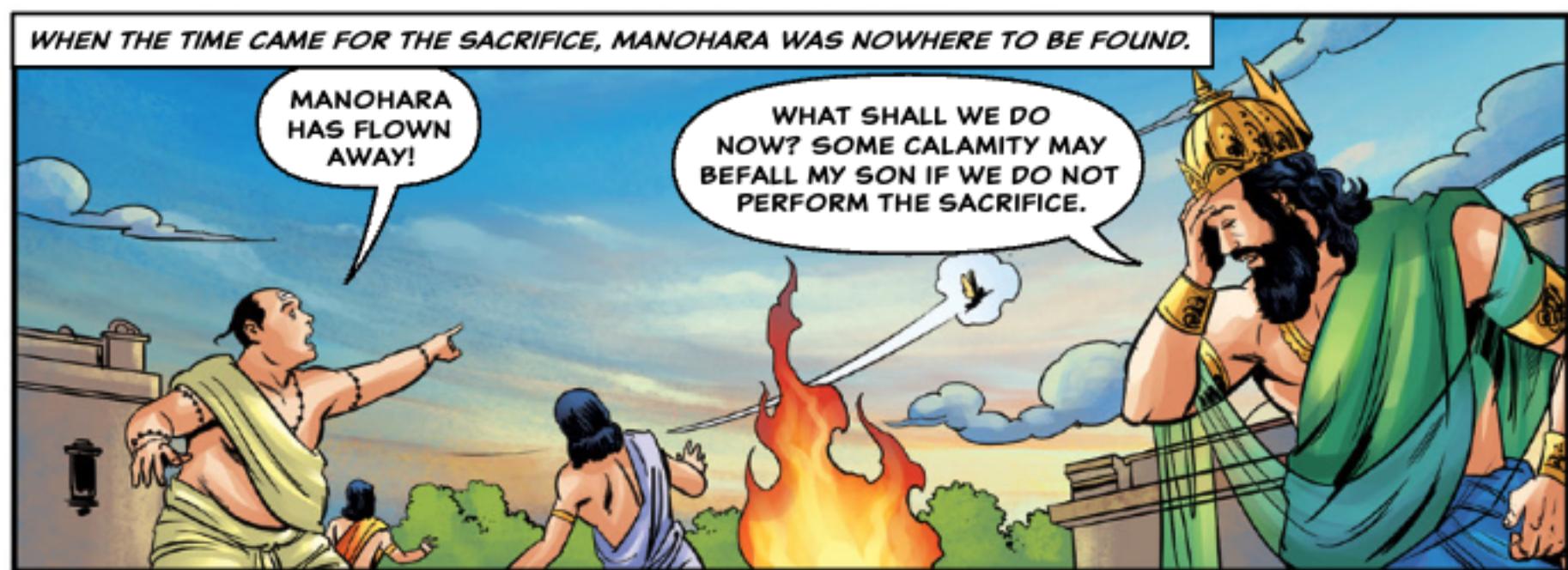
THE QUEEN RUSHED TO MANOHARA'S CHAMBER.

YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER. HERE, TAKE YOUR HEADBAND AND FLY AWAY.

PLEASE GIVE THIS RING TO SUDHANA. TELL HIM TO SEEK ME OUT IN MY FATHER'S KINGDOM ON MOUNT MANDARA, IN THE HIGHEST PART OF THE HIMALAYAS.



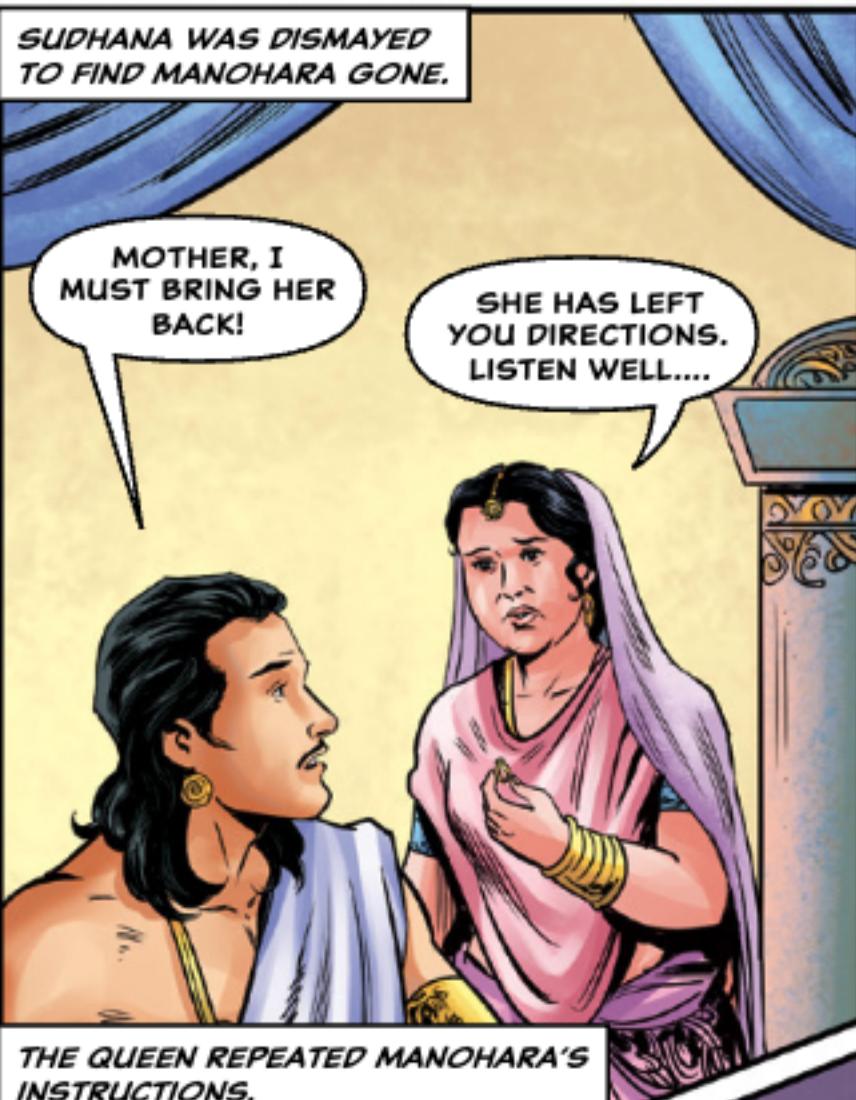
WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR THE SACRIFICE, MANOHARA WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.



ON HEARING THE FULL STORY, THE KING EXILED THE PRIME MINISTER.



## SUDHANA AND MANOHARA



AT THE BASE OF THE FIRST RANGE, HE LEAPT OVER THE RIVER FULL OF CROCODILES USING BAMBOO POLES.



AT THE BASE OF THE SECOND RANGE, HE OUTWITTED THE RAKSHASI.



WHEN SMOKE BILLOWED UP, THE RAKSHASI RAN AWAY CHOKING AND SUDHANA RACED UP THE SLOPES.

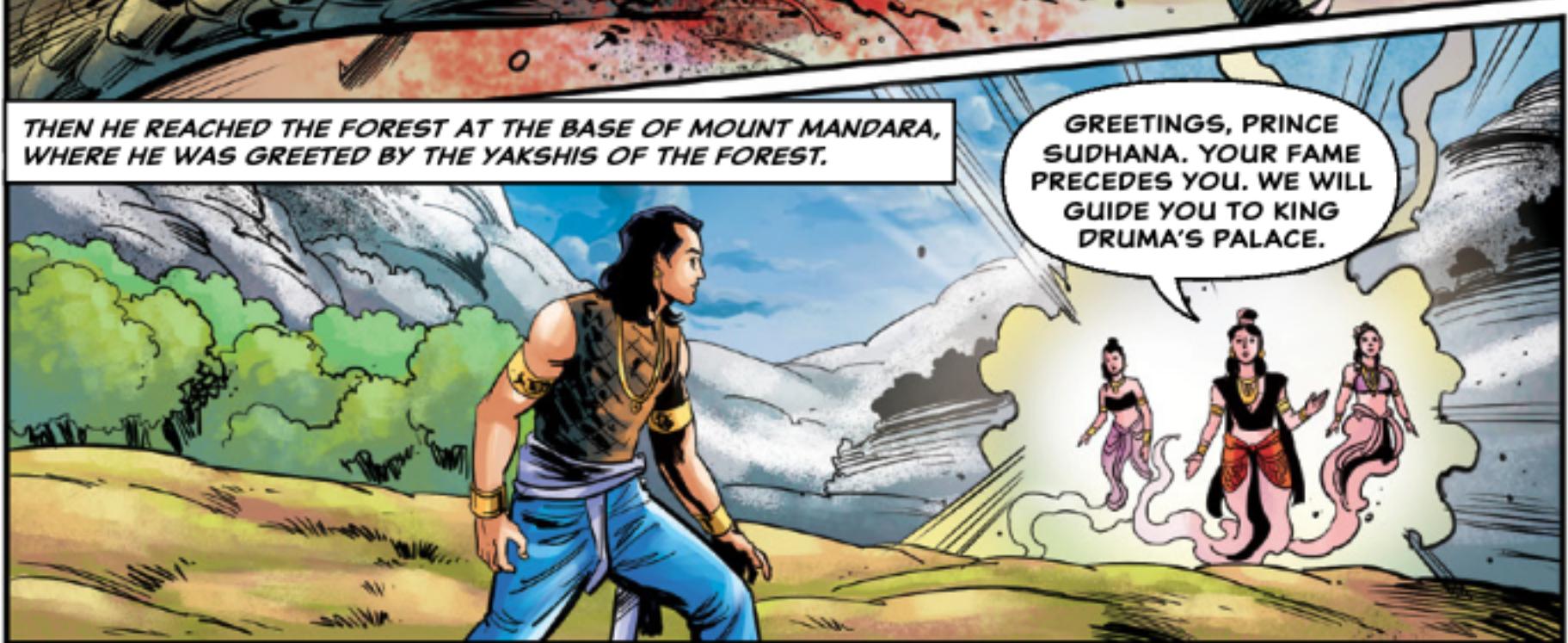


## SUDHANA AND MANOHARA

FINALLY, AT THE BASE OF THE THIRD RANGE, HE LEAPED ON THE SERPENT'S BACK AND CUT ITS NECK FROM BEHIND.



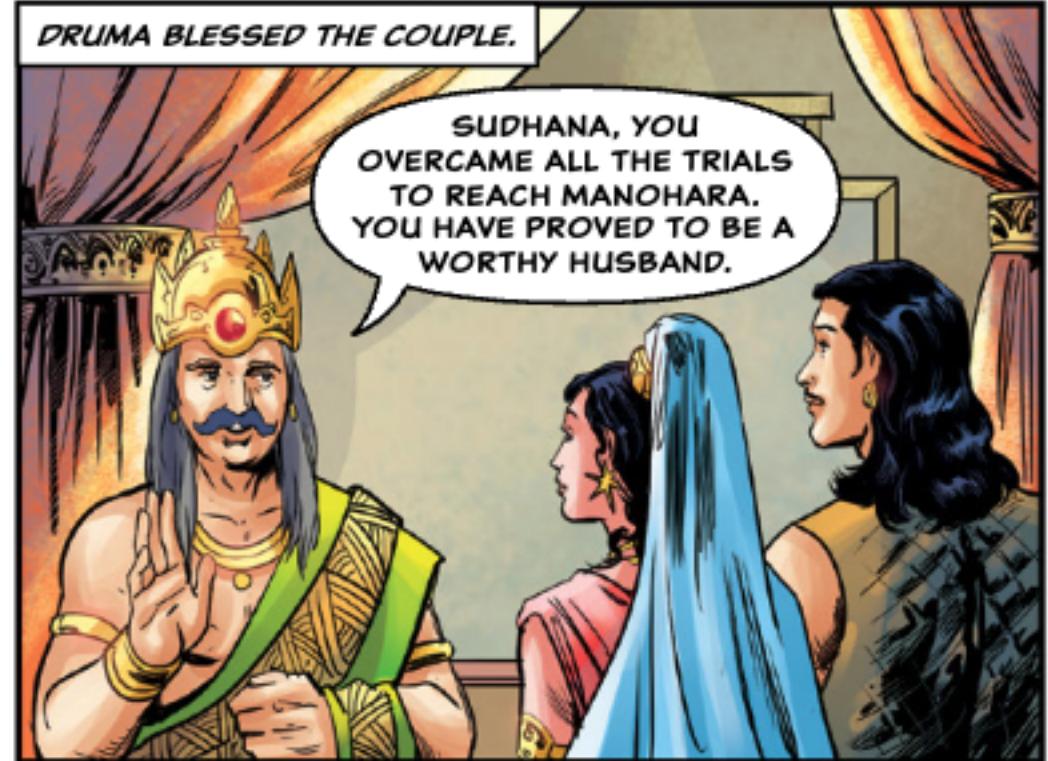
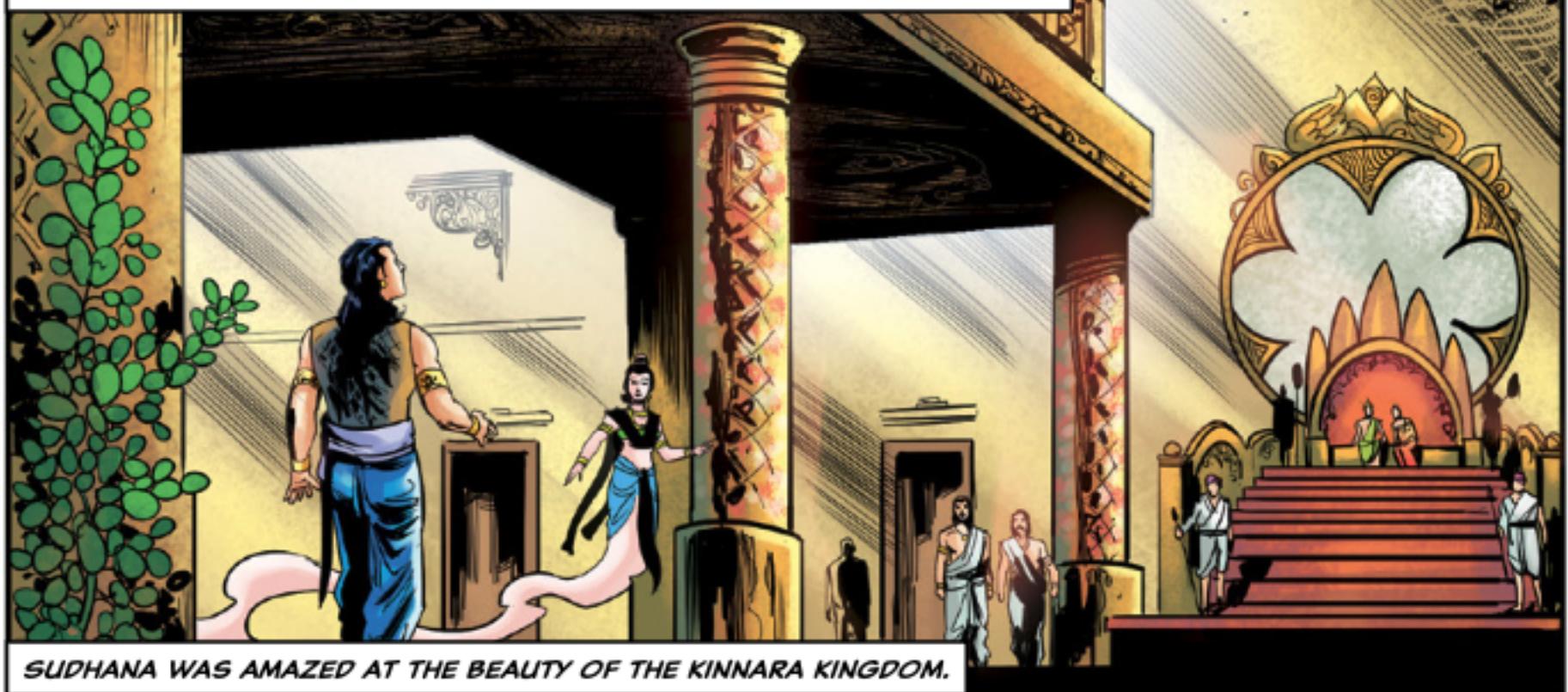
THEN HE REACHED THE FOREST AT THE BASE OF MOUNT MANDARA, WHERE HE WAS GREETED BY THE YAKSHIS OF THE FOREST.



ALONG THE WAY, SUDHANA MARVELLED AT THE LAND OF THE KINNARAS.



DRUMA'S PALACE WAS MADE ENTIRELY OF GOLD, WITH CUPOLAS GLEAMING IN THE SUN. THE WALLS AND PILLARS SPARKLED WITH GEMS.



# EDITORIAL NOTE



“ Having done so many stories from mythology, we thought we would take up some of the lesser known beings from the Hindu universe. Apsaras are well known since they are part of the stories of many famous sages and heroes, but gandharvas, kinnaras, vidyadharas are relatively lesser known. Our research brought up many stories related to these celestial characters and we chose 12 special ones for our readers. We trust you enjoyed the stories.”

**Reena Ittyerah Puri, Executive Editor**

“ For readers of classical myths and adventures, here is a masterpiece. This new 128 pager will teleport you to a world of extraordinary stories and beings in celestial forms. This book is a culmination of the writer's and artist's imagination at its best. Arijit excels, with his endearing images and compositions of scenes bringing to life every panel from the story in a lucid flow of visuals. My favourite is the story of Sudhana and Manohara. The colours done by Prakash are magical and will make you fall in love with this celestial love story.”

**Savio Mascarenhas, Group Art Director**

“ An affinity for trees, water, earth and pouring rain is instinctive to humans, and predates all the formal religions. Forest groves were the first temples, and rivers and mountains are sacred to this day. The earth brings life and has untold mineral treasures.

Growing up, I was fascinated by the magic of the natural world. Every tree had a spirit, and every cloud, a story. Our mythology acknowledges this, and it connected me as much to human nature as to mother nature. The celestial beings that inhabit the mountain slopes, forest groves and clouds are just like us — affectionate, playful, angry, fallible or gullible.

With this book, I wanted to bring in that same enchantment of the natural world for the readers, and connect them to the earth in a way that's fun and relatable.”

**Malini Saigal, Author**



“ I was always fascinated by mythology and somehow it creatively kept inspiring me. So when I got a chance to be a part of this title, I was very excited. From childhood, I had read so many stories about these celestial beings, which is why it felt less like work and more like a journey into my childhood memories. The scripts were exciting and accompanied with references and resources. With that, I had to do research in my own way.

However, the most important part was to trust the raw imagination and innocence of my old memories and connect with them. For me, it was a very enjoyable and extraordinary creative journey and I can only hope that readers will enjoy it too.”

**Arijit Dutta Chowdhury, Artist**

## FIRST LOOK

This sketch by our artist, Arijit Dutta Chowdhury, offers a first look at the universe in our comic. It features rough sketches of various celestial beings such as kinnaras, yakshas, and gandharvas. This initial universe sketch was crucial in visualising and developing the diverse characters, providing a foundation for the detailed artwork in the book. This preparatory work enabled Arijit to seamlessly proceed with the rest of the illustrations.



# THUMBNAILS & PENCILS



Here are some thumbnails from the story of Tilottama

Here's a pencil from the story of Jimutavahana

thumbnails are rough sketches that help the artist plan paneling, composition, and viewing angles. These quick pencils capture the artist's vision and provide a fluid preview of the page layout. This approach allows for even distribution of elements, which is required for the final artwork.



Here is a style of pencils from the story of Tilottama that looks very close to inks. This style saves the inking time for the artist.



Pencil of a close up with suggestion of a thought bubble from the story of Kubera.

# INKS

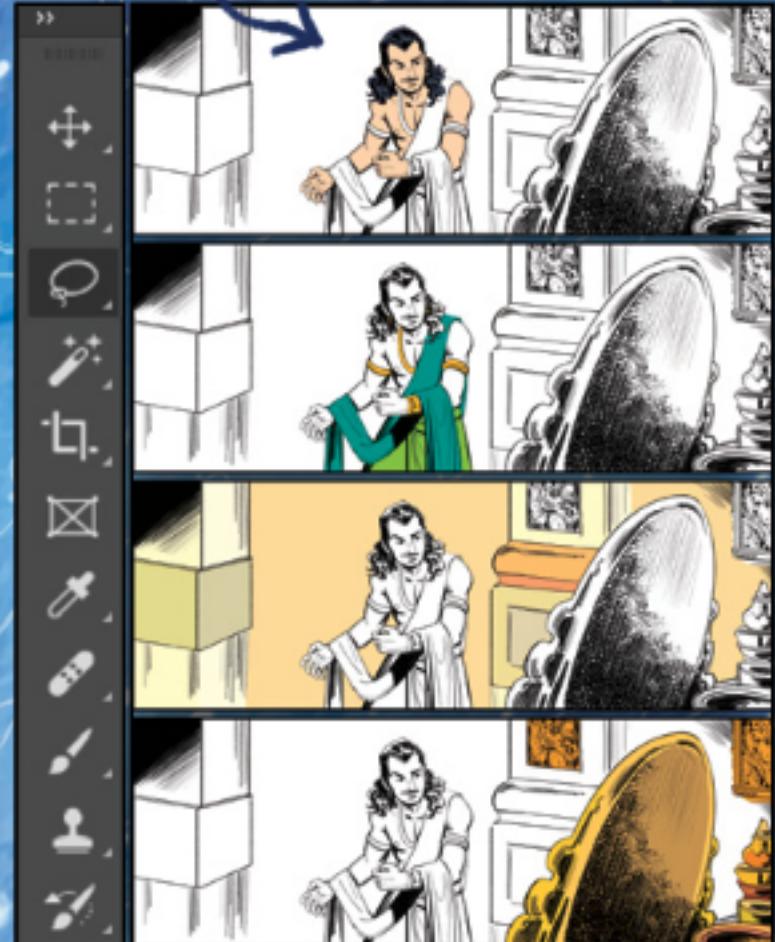
After the pencils and editorial feedback, the artist moves to inking, adding sharper lines, facial features, and detailed backgrounds. Hatching with ink strokes is also done by the artist to suggest the shadows. While traditionally done with pen and paper, we now use both traditional methods and digital softwares. This particular book was inked digitally.



# FLATS

*Flats from Tumburu showing skin tones, clothes, ornaments, background and foreground colours marked differently.*

The process after inking is called flats, which helps the colourist select and shade the art. In this step, the colourist manually selects different sections of the artwork using a lasso tool and applies different colours to each section. This makes it easier during shading to selectively colour specific parts. At times, flats help the colourist choose the right colours, though it can be a laborious and time-consuming process. Srinath, Vineesh, Rageevan and Amaan are the flat colourists who contributed to this book.



# COLOURS

A painterly style of colouring from the story of Hariti by Abhirami. This colour palette of dark pinks and purples rightly accentuates the theme of the story, which is about an ogress who has a change of heart and becomes a loving protector.



In this comic, while Arijit has created all the artwork, the colours vary greatly across the different stories. Each story features a unique style and colour palette: some have a water-colour style, others a pastel palette, and some a traditional comic style. These differences are beautifully showcased in elements like fire, sky, and water, as well as in the distinct appearances of the characters' clothing in each story.



Here are colours from the story of Kubera, the king of Yakshas. It has been coloured by Prakash in a traditional comic style with more cool-toned colours.



This panel is from the story of Suryaprabha, who becomes the king of the Vidyadharas. It is coloured by Sanjhiya in a bright and bold colour palette to reflect the greatness of the human prince who achieves the status of a Vidyadhara.



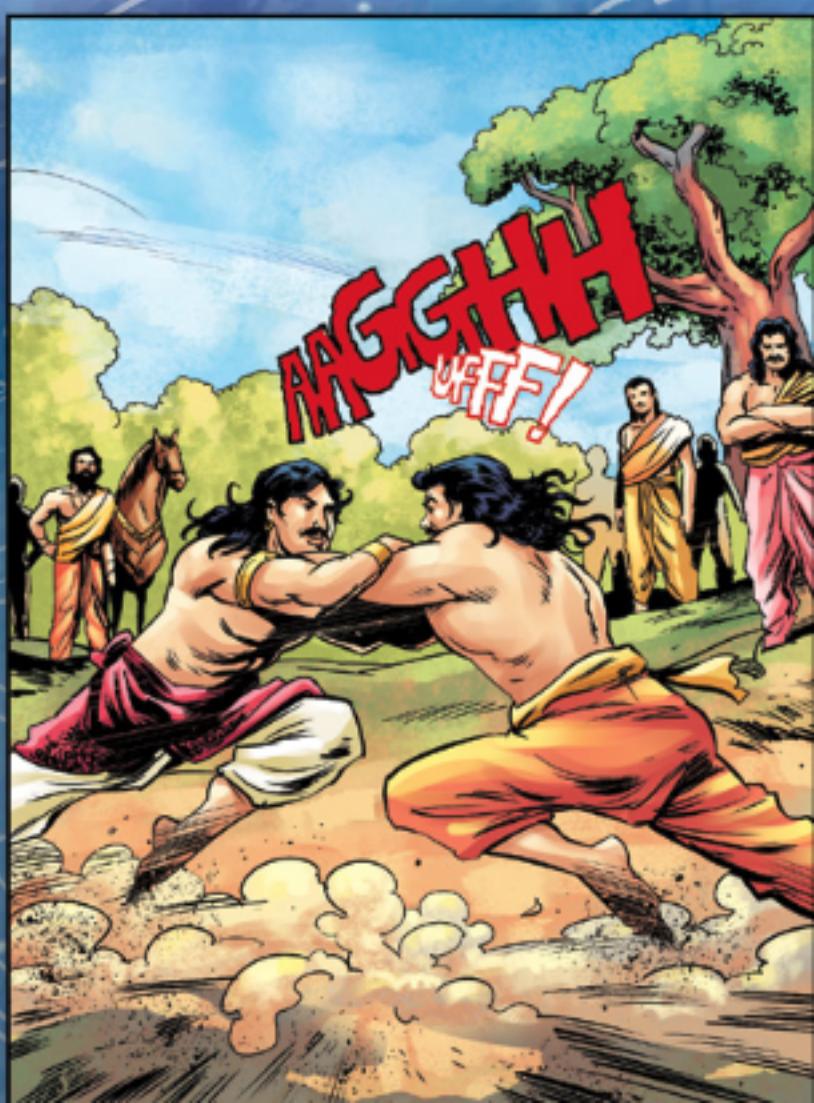


## LETTERING & SFX

Now, let's dive into an essential aspect of the book: lettering. Effective lettering is crucial for conveying the story clearly. Throughout the book are found various speech bubbles, thought bubbles, commentaries, and footnotes that advance the narrative. Speech bubbles not only relay dialogue but also emotions, with different pointer styles indicating different tones and contexts. For example, long, thin pointers show something spoken out of range, while short, fat pointers are used for close-up, softer expressions. Whisper balloons are denoted by dashes, and thought balloons are cloud-like with circles directed at the character's head.

Additionally, SFX (sound effects) are either hand-drawn or digitally modified text to express sounds like shouting, crying, or anger, enhancing the impact of the story. An example of this can be seen on the right side.

The AAGGHH! and UFF! are special effects (SFX), which convey the sounds made by the duelling men.



long pointer

short pointer

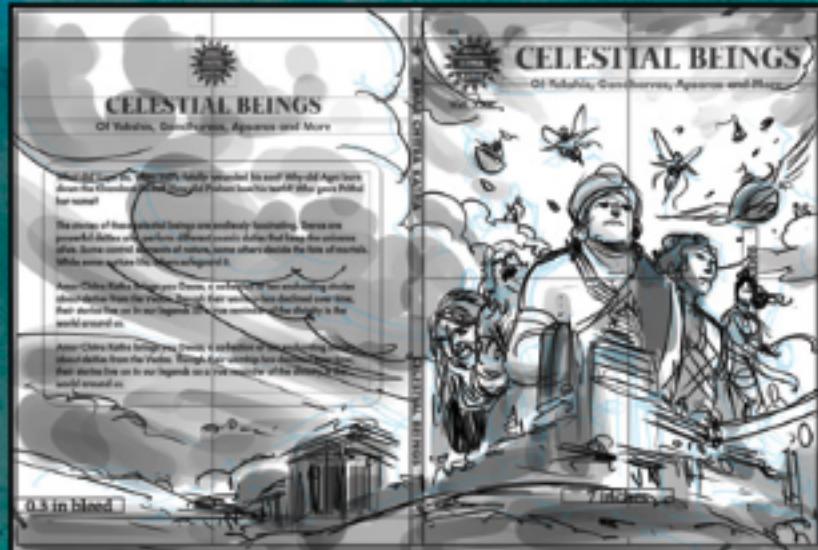
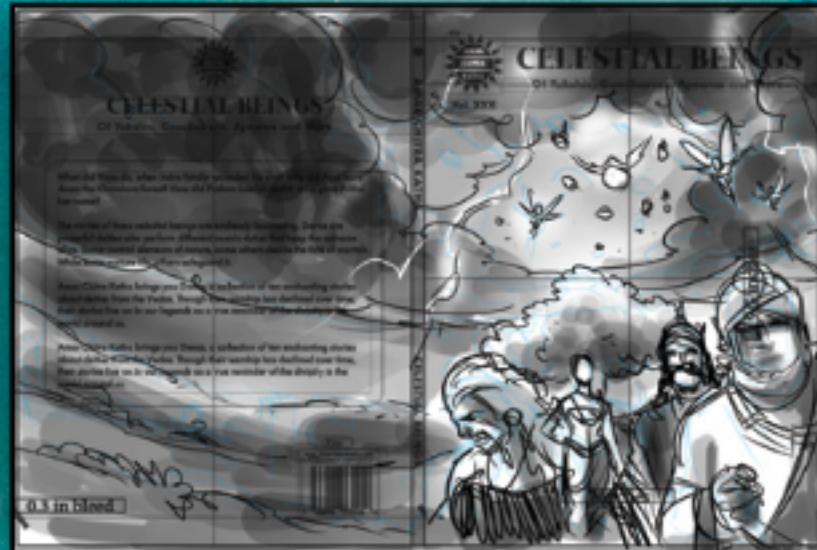
Thought bubble

Whisper bubble

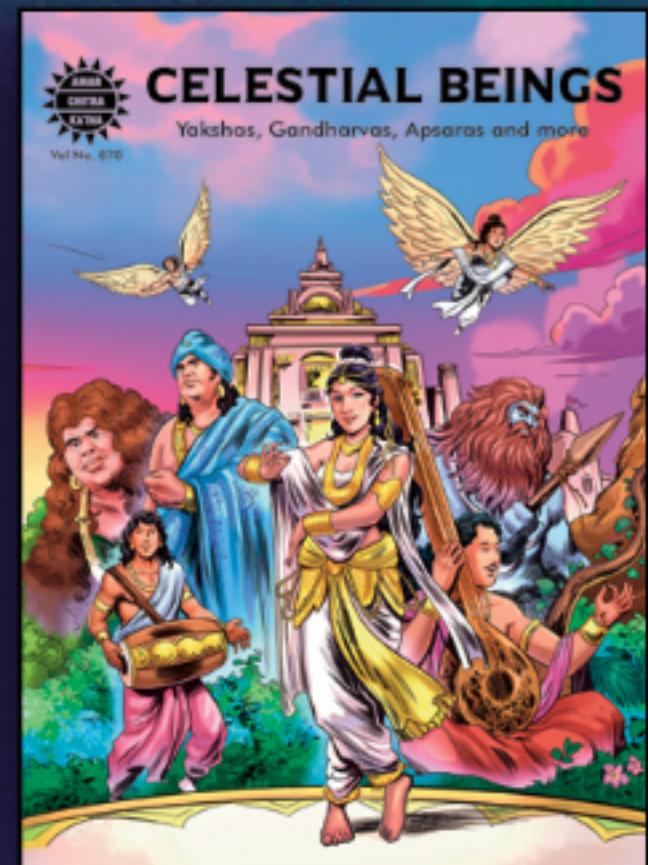
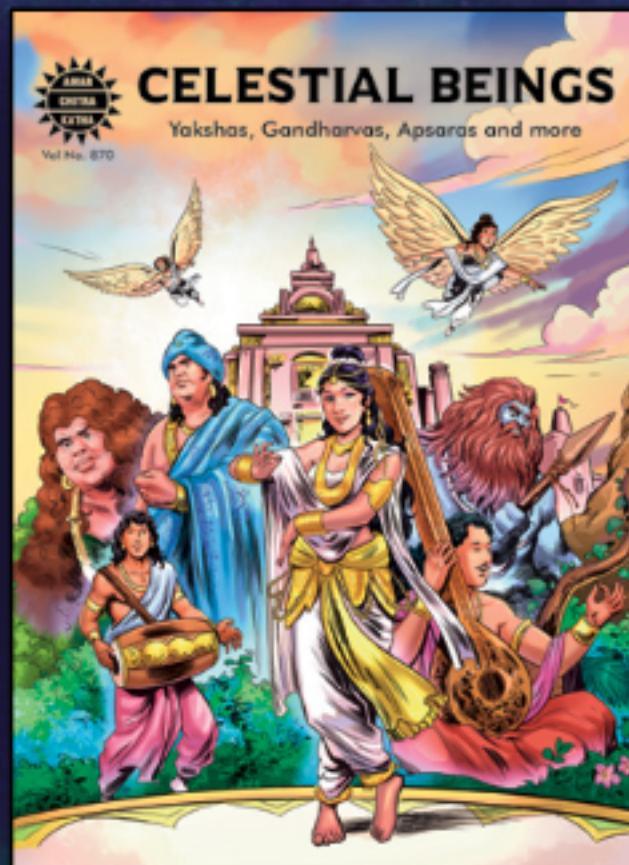
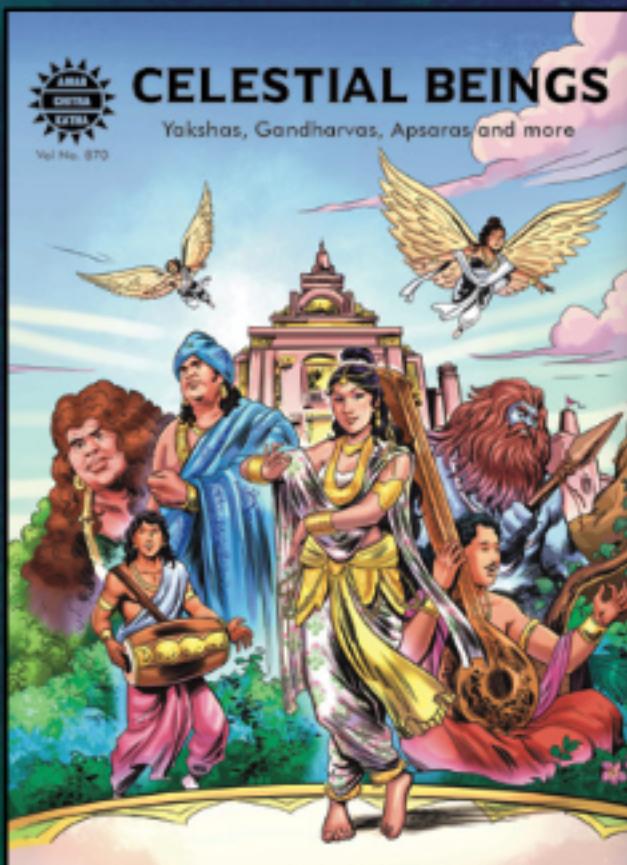
# COVER EVOLUTION

The cover is a very important part of the book, which sets the tone and makes people want to read it. Like the inside pages, the cover goes through multiple stages of refinement, including thumbnails, pencils, inks, colours and several rounds of corrections. Here you can see the different versions of our book cover at various stages. Initially, Arijit provided three thumbnails, all featuring Kubera as the focal point, reflecting his importance. The thumbnails also had one in a movie poster style.

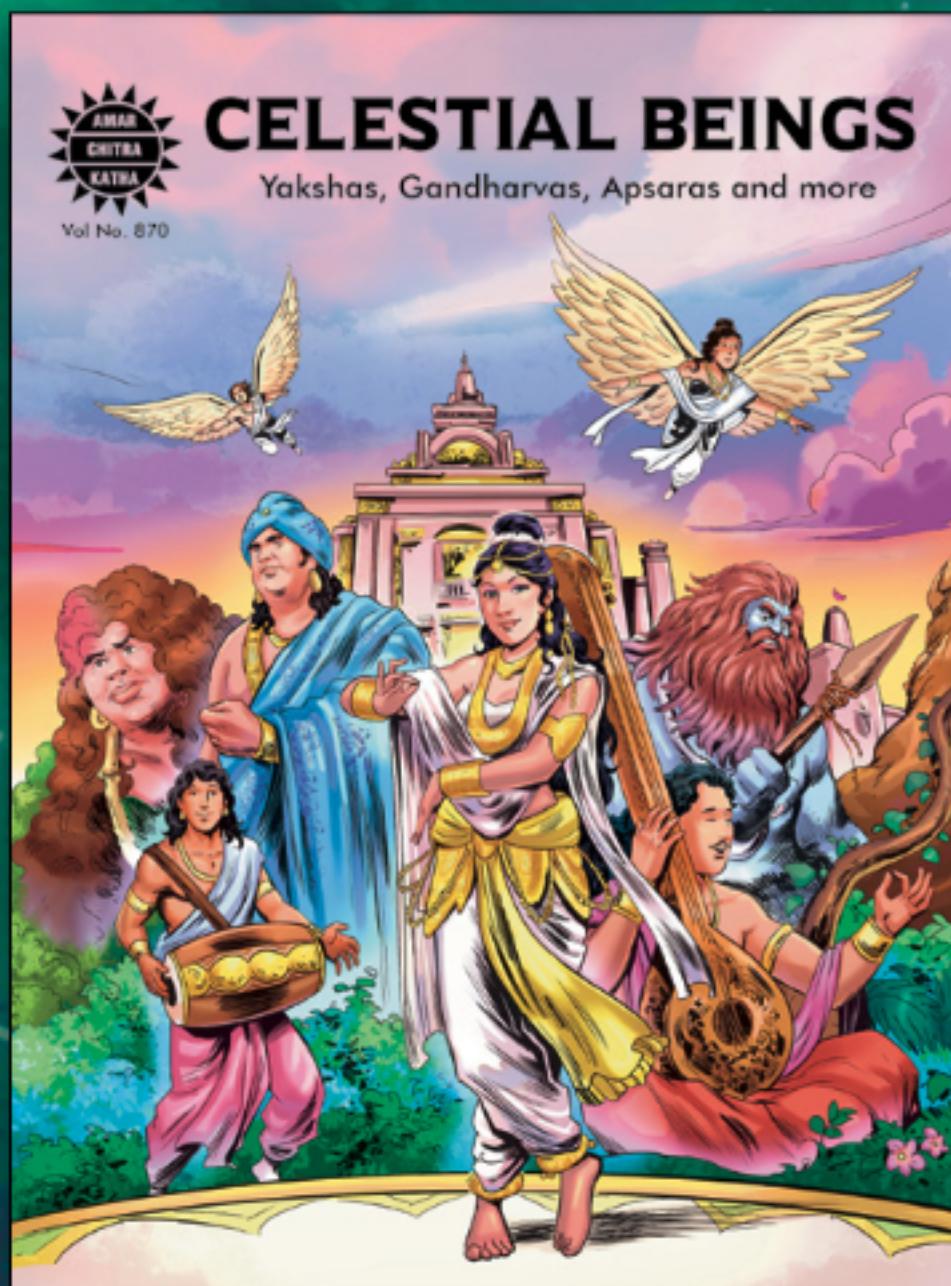
*Here are some of the earlier drafts of the cover. While designing the cover, it is important to keep in mind the layout for title, subtitle and logo. The back cover is also designed alongside the front cover. It is as important as the front cover because it contains the introduction to the book.*



In the final version, all characters receive similar emphasis, creating a magical and celestial scene. The back cover extends into a beautiful landscape. This final ink was selected and sent for colouring.



After finalising the inks, we move on to colouring it. Sanjhiya Mayekar, a senior colourist, brought the characters to life with her vibrant, magical colour palette. Initially, the cover was coloured with a simple blue, sky-themed palette, but later it was changed to give a 'golden-hour' appeal. Our CEO, Preeti Vyas, noted that we had used a similar colour palette earlier and since each Amar Chitra Katha is unique, we experimented with pinks and vibrant hues. The final cover is a result of our teamwork and experimentation.



“ Celestial Beings showcases the exceptional art of Arijit Dutta Chowdhury based on well researched and engagingly scripted stories by Malini Saigal. The relentless proofreading by the editorial team as well as the design team's uncompromising efforts, made the book possible.

We have included eight uniquely illustrated special pages, featuring diverse art styles of three different artists from our in-house team. The special pages are hand-drawn and coloured in a contrasting style to the traditional comic art style.

Additionally, we also have a comprehensive 'behind-the-scenes' section to give you a sneak-peak into the making of the book. We hope you enjoyed reading our book as much as we enjoyed creating it.”

**Ritoparna Hazra, Art Director**



EPICS & MYTHOLOGY



# CELESTIAL BEINGS

**Yakshas, Gandharvas, Apsaras and more**

The universe of the Puranas, the Vedas and the Epics are peopled with gods and goddesses, asuras and rakshasas, sages and warriors. But there is another dimension. One that is filled with celestial beings. These celestial beings, either divine or semi-divine, possess magical powers and act as messengers, entertainers, courtiers and helpers to the devas and asuras.

Amar Chitra Katha brings you stories of Apsaras and Gandharvas, celestial dancers and musicians who delighted audiences with their music and dance. Yakshas and Yakshis, the ancient spirits of the forest and rivers, revered as the bringers of fertility and prosperity. Vidyadharas, adept in all the sciences and secret mysteries, and always called upon to help in times of crisis. Kinnaras, bird-like creatures, adept at music and magic. Born to a particular role, these celestial beings face challenges and stand against adversity.

Read here, among others, the stories of Kubera; a Yaksha and the lord of wealth, Menaka; an Apsara and the mother of Shakuntala, and Tumburu; a Gandharva who was cursed to turn into an ogre.

[www.amarchitrakatha.com](http://www.amarchitrakatha.com)

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